

Common Council

Meeting

City of Middletown

January 19, 2021

Pledge of Allegiance -

Please remain standing for a moment of silence for Ald. Jean-John Francois, his brother passed away. May he rest in peace. Thank you.

Roll: Ramkissoon - here, Tobin - here, Kleiner - here, Johnson - here, Jean-Francois - absent, Burr - here, Green - here, Masi - here, President Rodrigues - absent.

Ms. Sisco: May I have approval of minutes?

Motion to approve the minutes of December 1st and November 17th, 2020 and January 4th, 2021, as submitted.

Mr. Masi: Motion by Ald. Ramkissoon, second by Ald. Kleiner. Any comments?

There were no comments.

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.

Mr. Masi: Correspondence.

Ms. Sisco: We have one correspondence from the Howels Fire District. They would like to express their gratitude for the donation made towards the utility terrain vehicle and trailer that was purchased to protect the public using the reservoir trails.

Mr. Masi: All right, file it.

Ms. Sisco: Okay, that's it for correspondence.

Mr. Masi: Anything else?

Ms. Sisco: That's it, thank you.

Mr. Masi: Okay. For the good of the City, anyone want to address the council for the good of the City. Eileen, I understand you have a couple of people.

Eileen Francis: We do. The first individual we have is Alexi Fernandez.

You are unmuted, go right ahead, you have three minutes.

Alderman Masi: You got three minutes Alexi.

Alexi Fernandez:

My name is Alex Fernandez. I'm general manager of one of the recycling centers in the Middletown area and one of the individuals leading the charge against pollution, and corruption in New York. I'm making this (inaudible) not here, not now, then when - one planet, one life.

I want to talk today because I'm afraid of what big money is doing to free speech. It started with the banning of the (inaudible) Alex Jones. But now even in the ban - they even turned on the president of the United States, which I admit, I'm not a fan of. But I'm no fan of Joe either.

However, I am a fan of constitution and the freedom of speech. What we need right now are more - not less. I also want to talk - pollution and how much for recycling and drinking a lot of water, there's a huge fracking power movement poisoning our ... a lot of us tried shutting it down before it opened, but the Mayor pushed for it. Even calls ... at least the Mayor got us a ten million dollar check, but in recent 2020 Cornell University (inaudible)

Ald. Masi: Are you still there?

Alexi Fernandez:

I believe the reason God put us on his world is to make it better, not to destroy it - poisoning. Whether it's poisoning, whether pollution or corruption, our fight for air and water isn't over yet. And we will keep fighting until we shut it down.

Also, I want to talk about systemic racism. My father is an NYPD officer. And recently, a black lives matter rioter attacked my dad and gave him a concussion. But a few bad people do not invalidate the fight of the oppressed. We need more love, not less.

I mean look at the racial makeup of our police department - last time I checked in 2017, our police were ninety percent - ninety-one percent white. Yet our community is thirty percent white, thirty percent black and thirty percent Hispanic. Our Town not represent our community and it is the gate keeper's fault. While I respect the gate keeper's for his military service and for teaching math, the gate keeper saying it is the minorities fault for not scoring high enough, should be enough for him to be removed. If it walks like a duck and talks like a duck, then it's a duck. Therefore, it comes with personal responsibility and systematic racism, I'm asking for Joe Masi to resign or to be removed. Once again, thank you for your service. (Inaudible) problem of our day.

Lastly, I want to talk about the election. How is it that Kanye West got no votes from the huge State of New York. Well I know one person who voted him in, as an experiment (inaudible)

some of those votes. Even though I think Trump would have still lost, it is both corrupt republicans and democrats who silenced the voices of those who want something different. If it's not rigging, then I don't know what it is. I believe we should be run by people who believe in man, in science and love.

Alderman Masi: Alexei, you better wrap it up.

Alexi Fernandez:
(Inaudible) and big money. Thank you.

Alderman Masi: You're welcome. Thank you. Anyone else, Eileen?

Eileen:
Yes, uh, we have Ms. Vanessa Cid. Vanessa, you can unmute yourself.

Alderman Masi: Vanessa, are you there?

Vanessa Cid:
Hello everyone, good evening, Vanessa Cid here. I am now in Ward 2 and I am so happy to see you all safe and healthy. Unfortunately, the reason why I am here today, um, as some of you may have heard, there are community members in our ward that are facing eviction under an eviction moratorium. It is illegal. It is unsafe. And it is very disappointing to see that happening, um, when we have the resources available, but unfortunately, they're limited; and there has been some outreach and communication done since finding the resources necessary, unfortunately, it's gotten to the point where the landlord is now harassing the family. And the only form of communication between the landlord is happening through their fifteen-year-old daughter, who happens to be a high honor roll student, but unfortunately is having direct contact through, technically, the landlord, translating the horrible things and comments that he's saying.

And this is what we need to see that these resources weren't readily available, uh, the Middletown sees, and it's something that I would love to see. And I also wanted to come today and ask you all not to take a stand, but definitely, read a little bit more of the Bill that's currently in the State Senate. It's S8802 and I will email all of this after tonight's meeting.

It's a Bill that would not only cancel rent, but also cancel mortgage payments for the small home owners, because it's something that we need, we were hit by COVID. COVID did not discriminate. And unfortunately, a lot of folks are facing the same exact situation that I talk about today. But a lot of them are afraid to speak up because of their status. And that's something that should not be happening and I think it's something that the community should all stand behind.

And in a few days, I know you will all be hearing about this, uh, through the news. But I did invite, uh, her children today to speak, because they did want to speak from their own experience, what they're going through. And they would also love for you all to take into

consideration, the senate Bill, S8802, and hopefully to sign on the letter of support to be sent to Albany. Because right now, it's in Albany, and we really need it to pass.

And so right now, here I have Melissa, who's going to introduce herself.

Melissa Diaz:

Uh, good evening, uh, I am Melissa Diaz. I'm sixteen years old, and I've been having to deal with the landlord, uh, threatening my family, um, harassing them, um, him wanting us to get out of the house and only giving us thirty days to move out. Um, it's been very hard having to deal with the text messages, having to translate them to my parents, having to listen to everything he's been saying, because he hasn't been very considerate about the situation that has been going on. It's very hard to be dealing with all of this. And, I hope you guys can help us with everything that's going on right now. And, um, the realtor, who's also not been helping us much. Uh, he's also been wanting us to get out, the same as the - the landlord, but I hope you guys can, um, can share this - this Bill that Vanessa commented about and, uh, thank you for taking the time and listening. Thank you.

Alderman Masi:

All right, thank you. Eileen, anyone else?

Eileen:

No, that is everyone.

Mr. Masi:

Okay, thank you very much. Remarks of the Mayor.

Mayor:

Well, first, I'd like to agree with Alexi Fernandez, or - that, uh, I'd like to see Mr. Masi step down also.

Mr. Masi:

Well, I've been wanting to step down - I've been -

Mayor:

I don't know, something about you being a math teacher. But, -

Mr. Masi:

I thought it was because I was a Veteran, and I was the only one, and he figured that he shouldn't have any Veterans. I don't know.

Mayor:

Well, I don't know. But in regards to the evictions. Uh, I'm not sure what they're really referring to, because the Government signed the Bill on December 29th, that - uh, you know, prohibits and extended the eviction moratorium until May. So, maybe if she wants to send more information, there is documentation that people have to follow. Uh, the fact that, uh, you have to

prove that you are impacted by COVID - you can't just say that you're not paying your rent because I don't want to pay my rent, you have to have a COVID related reason for doing so. And it doesn't forgive the rent, you eventually have to pay the rent at some point.

So, I'm not sure exactly what they're referring to, but I understand that, uh, the Biden Administration is also going to extend the Federal side until probably, at least May or until the summer. So, uh, there are - there are protections for them, but the tenant must file the appropriate documentation with the landlord. And, uh, and the only people that can evict someone is the court. A landlord cannot turn off your water. They cannot turn off your electric, your heat. They cannot change the locks on your doors.

So, uh, there is adequate protection in place, but they must, uh, bring it to the attention of, uh, the Commissioner of Public Works Office, or you can call my office if you're being harassed by, uh, by a landlord. But, the first question that's going to be is, that you need to provide the appropriate documentation.

In fact, we recently had a case in which a tenant had water shut off at the curb. Um, we - within, uh, within a half an hour, responded to the call, contacted the plumber and made sure that the water was turned back on. You know, there's excuses and it ended up being an illegal conversion from a one-family to a two-family home. And the landlord did not have a permit for either unit, so it compounded more problems for himself, but, uh, we do react on landlord/tenant complaints, and there are protections in State law for the, uh, for the tenants.

Jerry, you wanted to ask a question.

Ald. Kleiner:

Uh, yes, if - if - if this is the same, uh, issue that I spoke with Vanessa about and Maria Bruni also helped. Uh, if it's the Lake Avenue one, it's not a question of paying the rent, cause the rent has been paid. It's the question of the landlord just giving them the one - less than a month's notice and that they have to be out.

So, I've sent them the numbers for Legal Services and other agencies and people to try and help. So maybe if they contact you too, but if they're - if it's the case that we've spoken about - that I've spoken about with her, then we have attempted to help, and are still attempting to help.

Mayor:

Okay, but - but the - the fact is that regardless of whether it's non-payment of rent or whatever, a landlord just can't go in and change the locks.

Ald. Kleiner:

Right.

Mayor: The only people that can evict, is a court.

Ald. Kleiner:
A court.

Mayor:
So, um, so, they - you know, we can't stop a landlord from going through the process. For example, if some one is not paying the rent, and they're still working, and they haven't filed the proper documentation, then a Judge can still evict that person.

Ald. Kleiner:
Yeah.

Mayor:
So, uh, so the - the process is the court. It's not the City. Uh, we - we can't - we can't stop an eviction, but the facts will stop the eviction, when they go into court and they tell the Judge: I filed the - the appropriate paperwork. I have - I've been impacted by COVID, and, uh, the, uh, you know, the story goes on.

Ald. Kleiner:
Well that's why we tried to ...

Mayor:
Yeah, but you're saying ...

Ald. Kleiner:
- for legal assistance. That's -

Mayor:
Yeah, -

Ald. Kleiner:
- that's what it is.

Mayor:
- yeah, yeah. So that - but we don't offer legal assistance through the City, but you - Maria did say she had a note there that she did contact - offered you the - the information too, so -

Ald. Kleiner:
Yes.

Mayor:
- so we're, uh, we're on the same page, I guess, with that.

Ald. Kleiner:
Okay.

Mayor:

But, yeah, they need to, uh, they - they need to contact, uh, possibly legal aid, if they need representation, but eventually, you know, you can represent yourself in court too.

Ald. Kleiner:

Yes.

Mayor:

And, uh, if you can't afford an attorney.

Alderman Masi:

Now, Ald. Johnson had a question.

Mayor:

Yes, sir.

Ald. Johnson:

When you say documentation, is there a form online somewhere or just a -

Mayor:

Yeah, the State has a form that, uh, that you can, uh, - and if they don't have access to it, then we can provide them with a copy. But they can go to the public library and do it. But there are questions and you - you know, the landlord is entitled to the proof that you've been impacted by COVID. How they define impacted by COVID, I don't know if it's solely by losing your job, or - or your hours were cut - could be family illness. There could be a lot of things, but the Governor extended it until May in New York State, and there is also Federal protection.

But in New York State you do need to file the forms.

Ald. Johnson:

But it sounds like in this case, the facts of the case are not entirely clear. This might not even be COVID related.

Mayor:

Right. It may not be - it doesn't sound like it's rent related, uh, uh, lack of rent payment. It sounds like - but - but the - and if they are being harassed to the point where, it's inappropriate harassment, they should call the police department, and file a report with the police department. And you can tell that - uh, you know, the police will have to handle as a police matter. But, uh, the, uh, - they're not - a landlord is not entitled to harass a tenant, especially if they're paying rent, and, uh, and they're occupying the building or the - the premises, so - but if they have any trouble, they can - they can contact my office, and they can - we'll bring them and sit them down with the police department also, to address - to address the harassment part of it - of the - of the issue.

Um, the, uh, well, let me - let me get into, uh, this part here. I'm just still - in agreement with -

Mr. Fernandez.

Ald. Johnson: You are very disoriented.

Alderman Masi:

I wish he would call back so that I can find out why I'm supposed to step down. I didn't hear it.

Mayor:

Here's the COVID - the COVID part.

Ald. Johnson:

Be careful what you wish for.

Mayor:

We are up in, uh, - have some pretty big numbers.

By the way, I'm wearing my Green Bay Packer jacket tonight, because I wanted everyone to understand that the Green Bay Packers are playing this weekend, but Miguel is not here tonight because the Giants are not playing this weekend.

[Laughter.]

Mayor:

But, uh, I'm hoping he's watching for just a couple of minutes, and, uh, and - and can root me in for - for - to the Super Bowl. I'd appreciate your - your help.

But let's get back to COVID. We still have a serious problem in Orange County. New York State is, you know, uh, still increasing and the country is, uh, going crazy. And, uh, hopefully the craziness stops tomorrow - we'll, uh, - right now, vaccines have been frozen for the new vaccines. Um, people who are getting a second dose are now into that cycle, so, uh, the - we're hoping from what we're hearing, is possibly next there might be some vaccines, for new people, coming out.

I encourage everyone to go to ny.gov, you can sign up. You can send your information. You can sign up for email contacts. There are sites online where they are giving vaccines, if you qualify. Right now, the, uh - I think Binghamton might have been the closest one to, uh, to Middletown this morning. But the - they are going to open up more sites - State sites. The Federal government is talking about more sites. But in the meantime, please everyone, follow the rules the best you can and - and, uh, we are now into the, uh, the Middletown/Walkkill area. We have two of the top three active cases for communities in the county. So, please follow the directions as much as possible.

The warming station update, you know, as COVID has affected a lot of things, it's also affected our hopes of getting in there very quickly. Uh, we - I wanted to give an update, I know Jerry and

Andrew have been asking, and have been pushing for it. Um, as you know, we - we are using a quarter of a million dollar grant from the Cares Funding, Round Two of Federal Government. Um, this outlines the process that we went through in, uh, November and early December. And we did receive the funds on December 28th. We cannot make any commitments until December 28th to go forward with the program until we had the receipt of the funds.

So we did engage an architect on our own behalf, in early November. The submission was December 28th of the preliminary plans. We met with the architect, and it's Mr. Fucchi (phonetic), on January 5th. The bid opening for the work - for the majority of the work will be January 28th, and the award will be as soon as we can after reviewing the bid.

The City and the Board of Estimate approved the lease on December 10th and the Greater Middletown Interfaith Council, although they're okay with the lease, they will be physically signing the lease on the, uh, on the 15th or right around - right around now, they'll be signing the lease.

So, where does that leave us. Tonight, you'll be voting on a fifty-thousand-dollar fund balance transfer into this project. The money that we - under the Cares grant was two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. That covers some administrative costs also. The cost estimates to do the whole building to bring it up to certain standards, are in excess of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

So, the biggest problem that we had was the HVAC system. Uh, as you know, if you're familiar with the building, there was an add on to the building many, many years, maybe twenty-five years ago. That system that was put into the addition, is now shot. All the baseboards are gone, they're cracked. Uh, you know, was from many years of neglect, I guess, or freezing up - it could have froze up over the winter. We don't when it happened, but it did happen. And, uh, so any hope of just - restarting the system, went out the window.

So the - we - the money that we are going to appropriate tonight, from the Board of Estimate, will address the immediate needs of plumbing and HVAC, and maybe some minor electrical work. The major part of the, uh, the additional funding through the Cares Grant, will address the roof, when appropriate, the wall, the retaining wall outside, the floor has to be done immediately. Some of the kitchen work needs to be done. There's a lot of work to be done in the building in order to bring it up to the specs for the current needs, and then, for what we hope to be long term - a long term arrangement with the Great Middletown Interfaith Council.

We are three - four weeks behind schedule. We've been informed by some of the trades that supplies and equipment are hard to get. Uh, I know personally, I've ordered some flooring, and Home Depot, uh, is about two or three weeks behind on when we were supposed to get our floor for our house. So, I've experienced first-hand. But, uh, we are still focused on it. And we will get it done immediately. After you approve the transfer tonight, I will sign it first thing in the morning. And we already have the plumber and the electrician on board. So, we - we will direct them to begin work immediately. So, that's the best I can do, but on - on that. Paul, did you

want a question?

Alderman Johnson:

I just had a question. Is the capacity of thirty - is that for the foreseeable future?

Mayor:

Yes. Yes, and that's all they want.

Alderman Johnson:

Okay.

Mayor:

Yeah, that, uh, that's all the - the lease also limits it to thirty.

Alderman Johnson:

Thank you.

Mayor:

But that's all GMIC ones.

Alderman Johnson:

Thank you.

Mayor:

Any other questions on that? Okay.

All right, the State of the City will be held on February 2nd, as Jerry point out, Ground Hog Day, right? And, uh, so, we'll see how I see - what shadow I see.

[Laughter.]

Mayor:

I didn't plan it that way until you just said that to me before, but we will be broadcasting on Channel 20. Uh, there will be no in person - uh, we're limited to public participation within the building. And, believe it or not, I don't have much more than that, other than the, uh, the police report that I emailed you earlier today. That is the document that was adopted by the Special Commission, under the guidance of the direction of Governor Cuomo. We will be making that document public, and it will go up on all of our social media, for the public to review and for the council to review. We are required to hold a public hearing, hoping that you can schedule the public hearing on February 16th and that will give about a month for the public to review the document. Uh, people can submit written documentation- written input if they want, or they can speak at the public hearing or do both, give written comments. The - I think if you're, uh, - we have to adopt it by April. I - I think if you're prepared to vote that night, based on, uh, limited public input, and you feel free - comfortable to vote, uh, that would be fine, but if you need

another week or two after the public input, that would be fine also. We need to have it adopted and filed before April. So, uh, so I would say the latest would be the first meeting in March would be to file the document. So, uh, whatever way you want to do that is fine with me.

And I think it's more appropriate for us to have the questions back and forth in a public forum, when the chief will be able to address it, and address the public hearing questions, and - and so we'll - if you have any questions that you would like to prepare for that, you can probably send them. If you need any information data, and not just questions, additional data that you would like that night, please give the chief ample time to gather the data, so we'll be prepared to move on it, have the hearing, address the questions and then vote, hopefully during - very soon, shortly thereafter.

So any other questions?

Alderman Masi:

Any questions for the Mayor? Mayor, thank you.

Mayor:

It's been a pleasure.

Ald. Masi:

Ours.

Alderman Masi:

All right, department heads. Economic Development, Maria Bruni, please.

Maria Bruni:

Good evening everyone. Tonight we had a re-organizational meeting of the CDA Community Development Agency. Um, to date, we've completed successfully, nine properties. We've put them back on the tax roll. We have new home owners, new ownership, and we're on track, uh, to try to accomplish four in 2021.

And tonight, also, you have on - on the agenda, the transfer of two properties, 54 Washington Street and 33 Lafayette Avenue, to the community development agency, so we can start preparing those for the home ownership program, as well.

And that's all I have for tonight.

Alderman Masi:

Any questions for Maria? Maria, thank you.

Maria Bruni:

Thank you.

Alderman Masi:
Fire Chief, Mr. Barber, congratulations and welcome.

Mr. Barber:
Thank you. First, I want to thank Ald. Green and Healey, for their generous donation of a box of masks for us, for the Fire Department. Greatly appreciated and needed.

Uh, second is, the Fire Department is still trying to get our first vaccine. Our first shot for the vaccine. We've tried, the website has crashed. I've written emails. Um, so far we're still waiting. This week we know it's a second dose. Hopefully, next week we can get some members in.

Um, other than that, it's been a quiet month so far this month. And we're going to try and keep it that way.

Alderman Masi:
Well we certainly appreciate your attempts for the vaccine - keep going - hopefully, it will fall in place.

Mr. Barber:
I'm hoping - I'm hoping within the next couple of weeks.

Alderman Masi:
And welcome and good luck to next four years. Anyone have any questions?

Mr. Barber:
Three -

Ald. Masi:
I'm sorry, your wife is probably gonna throw something at me. Next three years. Any questions for Chief Barber?

Mr. Barber:
Thank you.

Alderman Masi:
Thank you very much. Police Chief Ewanciw.

Police Chief:
Good evening all. I have nothing this evening, unless you have questions for me.

Alderman Masi:
Any questions for the chief? Wow.

Police Chief:
Thank you.

Alderman Masi:
Is it me? Superintendent of Recreation, Chris Brinkerhoff.

Superintendent of Recreation & Parks Chris Brinkerhoff:
Good evening. I'm gonna be just a short, uh - we - you do have there for the Mayor to approve the geese police that we use every year. That is a tremendous service to our parks, without it, it's a mess. And they do a great job and they're very fair, uh, with the Davidge park expansion, that will be getting done, that will also be included in that price. So they do a great job. And the only thing I want to do, which - I know you're gonna be accepting a lot of donations, I said it last time, is thank the public for all the donations for these care packages. We continue to stay very busy, in fact, we get more phone calls all the time with people needing food, because the numbers are going up. Um, we're just under, in donations, not even grants, twenty-five thousand dollars. Another check for twenty-five hundred dollars, again, came today, from United Presbyterian's Thrift Shop, that are always giving back as well. So, we thank our entire community. It's amazing. That's all I have.

Alderman Masi:
Any questions for Chris? Ald. Kleiner?

Ald. Kleiner:
Thank you. Uh, Chris, I notice the geese police ask that we post signs saying: Do not feed the water fowl. And they also ask that we pass a local ordinance. They say it's helpful if there's a local ordinance against feeding the water fowl.

Chris Brinkerhoff:
There already is and we do have signage up as well. The signage, however, gets torn down constantly. We have some people that refuse to obey that. We've even called the police up when we find them feeding them bread, which is actually the worse thing for them. So, and I think there's an ordinance that was already put in place years ago.

Ald. Kleiner:
I couldn't - I couldn't find it, searching in code, maybe it's there, so -

Mayor:
It's not the federal code, cause, uh, I can -

Ald. Kleiner:
Yeah, I think it's supposed to be state or federal but they ask -

Mayor:
Yeah.

Ald. Kleiner:

- they ask also for a local ordinance, so -

Mayor:

Because I - I was once a guilty party, bringing my kids up there to feed the ducks when they were little, and I never noticed the sign, and sure enough, there was signage, up there, but, uh, -

Chris Brinkerhoff:

Yeah.

Mayor:

- I think a lot of people do it innocently. But maybe we need to - but they were small signs too. So a local ordinance will be fine with me if you want to talk to Alex and give him a draft one. Because it's damaging to - you know from my understanding, to the - to the birds.

Alderman Kleiner:

Right, and it makes it hard for them, so they do recommend it.

Mayor:

Yeah, yeah, so that's okay with me, if you want to -

Alderman Kleiner:

Okay, very good thank you.

Mayor:

But we need to sign it adequately too.

Ald. Kleiner:

Yes.

Mayor:

Not that little sign that the guy caught me with - It wasn't an officer, it was a - it was a person who lived up by there and told me, you're doing the wrong thing.

Alderman Masi:

Is there a statute of limitation on those crimes?

[Laughter.]

Alderman Masi:

Thank you, Chris. Public Hearings and Grievances?

Karen Sisco:

Nothing this evening.

Alderman Masi:
Petitions and Complaints?

Karen Sisco:
Nothing this evening.

Alderman Masi:
I thought we had come complaints earlier. I don't know. Okay.

Remarks of Aldermen
Ald. Burr?

Mr. Burr:
Nothing this evening.

Alderman Masi:
Ald. Kleiner?

Ald. Kleiner:
Makes it hard. Uh, first, I want to express my condolences to Ald. Jean-Pierre. I - I - this is the first I had heard of that, so - I'm really sorry to hear that, and, uh, my condolences to his family.

Uh, today, is the national day of remembrance is what I was trying to see what they called it. It's a - it's a candle lighting and other lighting around the country. It's a national day of remembrance for the four hundred thousand people who have now died from COVID. So they've asked, you know, everyone light a light, maybe candle, ring the church bells. But that happened today, in D.C. at the National Mall and so, I think we should remember it. I went on the website the first day with the vaccines. I was in that seventy-five and up category, where you're not happy to be in, but you're there, and so, uh, you know, of course I was eligible and then you look at ten miles, then you look at twenty miles, then you look at thirty miles, then you look at forty miles, and they all, when you call, just go, basically, why are you calling? And they - call back in February or March. So, there is no vaccine. I mean we need to remember that this past administration passed on a hundred million doses, and then that reserve supply they were gonna release, turned out to be a phantom. And it's just not there. So we're hoping with the new administration, that they can really ramp up production. But I still - before I came in, on the local - on the New York News, you see the ad from New York State for sign up for your vaccine, it's easy and it's fast. It's not easy, it's not fast and there is no vaccine. But they're still running the ad, so I don't know, it's - it's - it's hard - it's hard to understand. Uh, but, we'll - we'll be patient. I mean, at least New Jersey put smokers to the front of the line, and is something that I don't understand, since that's a choice.

Uh, for Middletown, my, uh, what - what other - the other thing I would like to see - we have a

lot of moratoriums. But I've been thinking about the people who, uh, in our code, the zoning, and I'm doing this tonight, cause I - otherwise I would do it ... I don't want to - you know, we usually focus on the Mayor state of the city, so this is my state of the city. Uh, when the zoning expires, your grand-fathering expires in one year. So if you have a building that's been vacant and you're working on it and you're repairing it or doing anything with it, uh, after a year, if you're in a zone that's been changed and you're grand-fathered in and that's expired, then you have to go to the zoning board and prove hardship. I think we ought to have a moratorium on that expiration, because people who have been trying to fix up properties, you weren't allowed to have work crews, you weren't allowed to have people out working on your properties. You we're allowed, so, I think it's something we should at least look at and, uh, -

Mayor:

We're tolling that, Jerry.

Ald. Kleiner:

What's that?

Mayor:

We're tolling that - we're not - if there's a legitimate -

Ald. Kleiner:

Okay, I mean that's -

Mayor: We're extending - we're extending the time. I don't know of any one case where someone has been impacted by the, uh, by the, uh, the one-year, nonconforming usage here. So, we can demonstrate - it's the same thing, we - I think it's dangerous to make a blanket change. We are considering it on a case-by-case basis of, uh -

Alderman Kleiner:

Okay.

Mayor:

I mean if someone is in the process of renovating a property, and they're having the same problem that we're having with ordering furnaces and things like that, then we're taking that into consideration. But I haven't been informed of one case yet of where that's happened. Now, if you do it blanket, what you're doing is, you're taking a - uh, a large home that has been abandoned for many years, and, uh, I'll give you an example, 37 Broad Street, it's a former six-family, uh, uh, you know, very small apartments and stuff, that under the theory of extending it, you know, you know just to everyone - a blanket, then you open that back up for that type of development. But on a case-by-case basis, we are doing it on a case-by-case basis, and so far, to my knowledge, and if you have any direct knowledge of anyone, please have them contact my office -

Ald. Kleiner:

Okay.

Mayor: - and we will - we'll try to address with them. But I think it's a dangerous thing to do with a blanket, but it is, uh, on a case-by- but they have to demonstrate. Again, the same thing with the COVID relief, you've gotta demonstrate that you've been damaged, you've been hurt, you've been unable to do it, and we're taking all those things into consideration.

Ald. Kleiner:

Okay. I mean I'm thinking you know at the zoning board and there haven't been a lot of filings at the zoning board recently, maybe for that reason. But I had people call me and some who got stopped - they were trying to put siding on their home - a gentleman on Linden Avenue, but he couldn't do it, cause code enforcement came out and told him he couldn't have two people working together. Well - kind of hard to put up siding with one person, so -

Mayor:

Well that was the state - that was the state -

Ald. Kleiner:

But that was an individual, you working on his own home but I'm just thinking of the number of times when people, uh -

Mayor:

But what does that have to do with the use, putting up siding has nothing to do with the use of the building.

Ald. Kleiner:

No, but if someone - if a building's vacant and - and someone is making repairs and then wants to re-rent it, but has a lot of repairs, those cases have come up at the zoning board.

Mayor:

As I said, you've got to be careful, because you're gonna open it up and it's - and it's gonna be uncontrollable. But they have to demonstrate. So that building's been vacant for three years and they bought a vacant building, and then - no, they wouldn't qualify because the building's been empty for three years.

Ald. Kleiner:

Yeah, no, I'm not talking about that.

Mayor:

But we have been taking it under concern. People that have called, I've told them the same thing, if they're having trouble with stuff, we'll extend their time limit, um, if they can't meet the deadline. Everyone has met the deadlines, so there's been really no - no big issue that I'm aware of. But if you have a specific one, anybody on the council, then please feel free, we'll - we'll walk it through.

Ald. Kleiner:

Okay, very good. Uh, the other thing I'm looking at is, thinking ahead in terms of a traffic calming device on James Street, because we're planning on, when we tear that building down, then straightening out that intersection, so you'll have traffic coming straight up Canal Street and going right across to James Street, where we have the handicap crossing, uh, or from the James Street parking lot or City Hall, and the - and the courts and the police station. And then a little farther down, in the future, we'll have the crossing for the Heritage Trail. So, I'd like to see us think about some kind of traffic -

Mayor:

Well understand, with the traffic pattern for the changes, you're gonna have push buttons at all those intersections. You're gonna have crossing, uh, uh, just like in New York City or at a larger city - so, you're gonna push a button and it's gonna tell you when to cross. It's not just putting up traffic lights, this is all the, uh, - especially in the higher pedestrian areas like -

Ald. Kleiner:

Like I mean the crossings where they're in the middle of the street, you know, the ones from the James Street lot to City Hall and the handicap one and then the one from the - further down for -

Mayor:

We have a traffic consultant, I'll mention it to them. But, uh, I don't - uh, you know, it's very close to the - to the intersection there. But that - the James Street - West Main Street intersection is gonna have a pedestrian crossing, uh, push button. So they'll be - it will be ADA compliant. So for people who have a hearing disability or sight disability, they'll be able to also cross safely. It's a State of the Arts stuff, it's a twenty-one million dollar project throughout the city, between the sidewalks and the crossings. But we will mention it to the consultant.

Ald. Kleiner:

Okay. All right, uh, I did say at the last meeting, that we were hoping that the next day or that day, actually we went and met Monday, so it was the next day that the two Democrats, if they won in Georgia, we would be having a Democratic Senate, so we're hoping that we'll get some federal aid - so it's still hope strong. And the Mayor mentioned that and the governor today mentioned that. We're depending on federal aid for the state and for the city budget. And so I - I hope that will happen.

I did also - back in December, remind people that sedition was a crime and I think you maybe see what I was talking about from two weeks ago on Wednesday. And, uh, I actually took a course in that senate parliamentarian's office. And - and, uh, to see it trashed the way it was, and to see people attacking our Capitol, when our - not politicians, our elected officials were there, actually trying to do the self-governing of this country, uh, a country, you know, based on the proposition that all men are created equal, and we had the Civil War where Lincoln said, we are now testing whether that nation or any nation so concede and so dedicated can long endure. Well, this is another great test, uh, we haven't had anything like this since the War of 1812, when the owner

of that building, 42 West Main Street, was up guarding our northern border with the Republican Blues in the War of 1812, so do have direct connections to that.

Uh, there was an attempt to steal the election, obviously, hopefully that attempt has been put to rest. There's absolutely nothing - nothing whatsoever to indicate that the election was anything but free and fair. Biden was ahead on the polls for the whole time of the election, all summer, all fall, he was ahead in the polls. Trump's approval rating never went up. Why in the world would you think that the election wasn't fair. And it's that big lie, and the big lie technique that got people to go and storm the Capitol to try and change the results of the election and overturn it. Uh, I'm sorry to take a lot of time on it, but you know, uh, Qanan and the Boogaloo Bois and the Proud Boys - since when do we want to go back to having white supremacists ruling this country and ruling it by intimidation and force and mob rule. We're a democracy, a Democratic Republic and I've often said, I'm a Democrat small d, and, uh, I'm going on because what - what happened two weeks ago was disgraceful, and uh, I'm hoping that we'll get past it and start to heal. Thank you.

Alderman
Masi:
You done?

Alderman Kleiner:
I'm done.

Alderman Masi:
Alderwoman Ramkissoo

Alderwoman Ramkissoo:
Amen, Jerry. Good job. Uh, I just wanted to say, uh, to the kids going back to school. Once again, this crazy, crazy school year, that I wish them all luck and I hope it goes well. It's been a chaotic year. I think everyone is just trying to muddle their way through it and I just want to say, we're like half way, so, woo hoo! Um, I feel like the new year really starts tomorrow, so, I'm looking forward to that as well, and everyone stay safe, and I hope we see our vaccines come in to keep our first responders safe and healthy. Thank you.

Alderman Masi:
Ald. Johnson.

Ald Johnson:
Thank you. I wish to go to a new beginning, let's see how it works out. With respect to Vanessa and her colleague, who spoke earlier, I hope they were listening long enough to realize they should take the Mayor's advice and contact City Hall and see what their- what kind of relief they can have with respect to the landlord/tenant situation. Thank you.

Alderman Masi:

Ald. Green.

Ald Green:

Thank you. Uh, I too, just want to extend my thoughts and condolences to Ald. Jean- Francois. He's not only a colleague, but a friend. So our thoughts and prayers are with you. Um, just looking forward to, uh - tomorrow, watching one of the, uh, one of the great events of America go down. Regardless of the party, it is ceremonious and a joyous event, and I just look forward to, uh, to watching our government in action and - and seeing how - how America does things. So, uh, that's it. Everyone just please, uh, you know, continue to wear your masks, wash your hands, socially distance. Uh, you know vaccines are coming slowly but hopefully surely, but, uh, you know, we're - we're gonna round this bend. We're gonna get through it and, uh, soon enough, we'll all be packing the beautiful Vessel Square again. Thank you.

Alderman Masi:

Ald. Tobin.

Ald. Tobin:

I'd like to echo Ald. Kleiner's, you know, condemnation of the, you know, the attempted interference of the peaceful transfer of power. I think what's one - you know the greatest - one of the most powerful nations in the world, we can be proud that we're transferring power to the 46th President. And also recognizing the fact that we have an historic, you know, first female Vice President. So this is, uh, a very, uh, historic election, and, uh, I plan listening to the - is it the accepted - no, the speech tomorrow, and, uh, like I have for every President, Republican or Democratic. So I think it's a very important day like Ald. Green said. Thank you.

Alderman Masi:

My only comment, Alexei, I don't want to disappoint you, but I'm not going anywhere. All right unfinished business.

Alderman Masi:

New business.

06-21 RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to authorize the Treasurer to transfer \$1,240.00 within the 2020 Recreation & Parks department budget for repairs to equipment in the following manner:

FROM	AMOUNT	TO
A.7321.495	\$1,240.00	A.7110.440
Special Programs: Misc.		Parks: Repairs to Equipment

Alderman Masi:

All right, we have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Tobin, seconded by Ald. Green. Any

comments?

Roll:

Karen Sisco:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.
Resolution passed.

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Green, seconded by Ald. Johnson.

07-21 RESOLVED, that the Common Council of the City of Middletown, NY, does hereby authorize the Mayor to sign the attached Tri-State Geese Police contract to control the Geese Population in Watts Memorial Park, Maple Hill Park and Fancher Davidge Park, including park expansion.

Alderman Masi:

All right, we have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Green, seconded by Ald. Johnson. Any comments?

Roll:

Female Speaker:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.
Resolution passes.

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Johnson, seconded by Ramkissoon.

08-21 RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to authorize the Mayor to sign the attached agreement with Fusco Engineering for SWPPP inspections of the new athletic fields which funding for this agreement is included in an approved capital project line.

Resolution to authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with Fusco Engineering for SWPPP inspections of new athletic fields.

Alderman Masi:

Isn't there more onto that? We have - which funding for this agreement has been approved in the capital project line on that resolution?

Karen Sisco:
(Inaudible)
SWPP.

Alderman Masi:
All right. We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Johnson, seconded by Ald. Ramkissoon. Any comments?
Roll:

Karen Sisco:
Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.
Resolution passes.

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Ramkissoon, seconded by Ald. Kleiner. Resolution to authorize the Mayor to sign an amended permit agreement.

09-21 WHEREAS; the City upon initial review of the PERMA agreement found operating differences between the current and previous agreement, and

WHEREAS; the City's insurance agent has reviewed and assured the City that the current operating procedures are in compliance with the new amended PERMA agreement.

SO LET IT BE RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to authorize the Mayor to sign the amended attached PERMA agreement.

Alderman Masi:
We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Ramkissoon, seconded by Ald. Kleiner. Any comments?
Roll:

Karen Sisco:
Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Klein - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.
Resolution passes.

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Kleiner, seconded by Ald. Burr. Resolution to accept a total of three thousand, four hundred thirty dollars that has been collected for the Parks and

Recreation letters to (inaudible) program.

Alderman Masi:

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Klein, seconded by Ald. Burr. Any comments?

Roll:

10-21 WHEREAS; During the COVID-19 pandemic the City started two fundraisers for the good of the City, and

WHEREAS; A Christmas Children's Fund was established to provide needy Middletown families Christmas gifts based on the City's letter to Santa program, and

WHEREAS; as of December 31, 2020 \$3,430.00 has been collected and been deposited in the Parks and Rec donation account T-43 per the account summary attached.

SO LET IT BE RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to authorize the Treasurer to approve and accept these donations and the expenses that will follow.

Karen Sisco:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye. Resolution passes.

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Burr, seconded by Ald. Tobin. Resolution to accept a total of eighteen thousand, six hundred and eleven dollars and thirty-eight cents, donations for the food and supply fund raiser during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Alderman Masi:

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Burr, seconded by Ald. Tobin. Any comments?

Ald. Kleiner.

Ald. Kleiner:

Uh, thank you. I just want to thank all the people who donated, uh, very generous, uh, a lot of donations and for both of these resolutions, a lot of outpouring, as, uh, as, uh, Chris Brinkerhoff has said. It's a lot of support, so we thank you.

Alderman Masi:

Thank you, Ald. Kleiner. Any other comments?

11-21 WHEREAS; during the COVID-19 pandemic the City started two fundraisers for the good of the City, and

WHEREAS; a food and supply fund raiser was held to accept money and supplies as donations

from the public to be re-distributed to Middletown needy in the form of food and supplies, and

WHEREAS; since April 20, 2020 thru Dec 31, 2020 \$18,611.38 has been collected and \$12,005.91 has been spent on products and distributed. The details are outlined on the T-83 account summary attached.

SO LET IT BE RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to authorize the Treasurer to approve and accept these donations and the expenses that will follow.

Roll:

Karen Sisco:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.
Resolution passes.

Resolutions sponsored by Ald. Tobin, seconded by Ald. Green. Resolution to authorize the treasury to transfer ten thousand, seven hundred dollars within the 2021 budget to cover the expenses associated with the Black Dirt Sewer Project.

12-21 RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to authorize the Treasurer to transfer \$10,700.00 within the 2021 budget to cover the expense associated with Trans Tech Geotechnical Services that was paid in 2013 and is not covered under the existing finance agreement with EFC in the following manner:

FROM:	AMOUNT:	TO:
G.909	\$10,700.00	H.904.900
Sewer Fund Balance		Black Dirt Sewer Project

Alderman Masi:

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Tobin, seconded by Ald. Green. Any comments?

Roll:

Karen Sisco:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.
Resolution passes.

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Green, seconded by Ald. Johnson. Resolution to approve the transfer of 54 Washington Street and 33 Lafayette Avenue to the Community Development Agency.

13-21 RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to approve the transfer of 54 Washington Street & 33 Lafayette Avenue to the Community Development Agency for the purpose of implementing the properties into the homeownership program, authorize corporation counsel to prepare the necessary documents and authorize the Mayor to execute all the documents for this transfer.

Alderman Masi:

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Green, seconded by Ald. Johnson. Comments?

Roll:

Karen Sisco:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.

Resolution passes.

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Johnson, seconded by Ald. Ramkissoon. Resolution to authorize the treasury to transfer fifty thousand dollars from the Journal Fund balance to make additional repairs and maintenance to 8-10 Mulberry Street for the Warming Station.

Alderman Masi:

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Johnson, seconded by Ald. Ramkissoon. Any comments?

14-21 WHEREAS; the Common Council on December 15, 2020 approved the use of 8-10 Mulberry Street as a Warming Station, and

WHEREAS; the Council approved a lease between the City of Middletown and the Greater Middletown Interfaith Council regarding the use of 8-10 Mulberry Street for the Warming Station, and

WHEREAS; the City was awarded from HUD a \$200,000.00 COVID grant to make repairs and improvements to 8-10 Mulberry Street for the Warming Station, and

WHEREAS; the estimated cost is \$250,000.00 which more funds will be needed to make

additional repairs and maintenance to 8-10 Mulberry Street in the amount of \$50,000.00.

SO LET IT BE RESOLVED; that the Common Council of the City of Middletown concurs with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to authorize the Treasurer to transfer \$50,000.00 from the General Fund Balance to make additional repairs and maintenance to 8-10 Mulberry Street for the Warming Station in the following manner:

FROM	AMOUNT	TO
General Fund Balance	\$50,000.00	A.1620.470 Maintenance of Buildings

Roll:

Karen Sisco:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.
Resolution passes.

Alderman Masi:

Local laws.

Karen Sisco:

Nothing this evening.

Alderman Masi:

Audit and Claims.

Alderman Johnson:

Mr. Chairman, I move the accounts be audited, the claims be adjusted and the City Treasury be authorized to issue warrants for their payment.

Alderman Masi:

We have a resolution sponsored by Ald. Johnson, seconded Ald. Burr. Comments?

Roll:

Karen Sisco:

Ramkissoon - aye, Tobin - aye, Kleiner - aye, Johnson - aye, Burr - aye, Green - aye, Masi - aye.

Alderman Masi:

Motion to adjourn.

Adjourn at 8:51 PM