

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

June 7, 2023

Audio recording of full meeting will be available on line on the city's website

Niles City Council held its regular meeting on June 7, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Niles Middle School in Niles, Ohio.

The meeting was called to order by Council Pro Tem President, Stephen Papalas and the Clerk, Nicole Bacak, called the roll:

Julian- P, Lastic-P, Papalas-P, Devorich-P, Marchese-P, Smith- P, Sollitto-P, Marino-NP

It was moved by Marchese, seconded by Papalas to excuse President Marino from the meeting. Motion carried.

It was moved by Marchese, seconded by Lastic to accept the minutes from the May 17th meeting and place them on file.

Motion carried.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

FROM- Letter from Michele Gentilcore

Clerk read the letter

It was moved by Sollitto, seconded by Smith to accept, and place it on file.

Motion Carried.

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

(Public comments began at 2:52 into recording)

Tina Collins: Ms. Collins asked for an update to the Kennedy Park dock since Home Depot backed out. Mr. Sollitto said the process is still moving forward. Mayor Mientkiewicz said the project did pass through board of control and now they are waiting on the contractor to begin the work. He said will check with Mr. Pallante on a tentative start date. Next, Ms. Collins wanted to know if Mayor Mientkiewicz plans on opening the building via the front door. Mayor Mientkiewicz again stated that the city building is open and that is all he is going to say. Anyone can come to the city building and come inside at any time. The building is open.

Ralph Cartino: Mr. Cartino said he used to live on Belmont but now lives on Hiram. He did a lot of work on Belmont, and he knows the council members know who he is. Ms. Marchese has

helped him with issues in the past. If you go up to the end of Hiram and take a left, the address is 1629. For 50 years, the Frasca's have tried to get someone to go there and clean up the junk. The garage is full of televisions and junk, and it is rat infested. He came to council tonight to try and get someone down there to look at this house and do something about it. He has pictures of the cars sitting there with all of the junk in them and of the house.

Mr. Cartino said the only person that is good in the department is Mr. Pezzano because he does his job and gets things done. Pro Tem President Papalas asked Mayor Mientkiewicz where they are with this issue because it was an issue 30 years ago. Mayor Mientkiewicz said this is an ongoing issue, but he can say that the employees have been up there and have gone through the process. Mayor Mientkiewicz said he believes this is a hoarding issue.

The city has reached out to Trumbull County Mental Health Recovery Board and the health department and unfortunately; there are no programs in place for hoarding. He will send the workers back up there to investigate but he is sure this will remain an issue because of the hoarding problem. He said if there are code violations, the city will absolutely deal with those. Mr. Cartino said he will not bring it up again, but he wanted to come here tonight to address this issue. He could come every day and talk about junk, not about the city building. He told Mayor Mientkiewicz he is doing good. He said they finally got the house on Belmont cleaned up after years of him complaining about it. Pro Tem President Papalas asked to give the mayor time to look into this and asked for Mayor Mientkiewicz to give them an update at the next meeting. Mayor Mientkiewicz said he will absolutely do that, and this issue will be addressed tomorrow.

Cane Dando: Mr. Dando is at council this evening to address an issue he is having trying to get a permit for a fence for about a year. He said it has been nothing but a hassle. He has had his property surveyed and he also has pictures. He watched his neighbors put up fences with no permits and nothing was said. A gentleman who lives two houses behind him has wild chickens and they are nuisance, but he doesn't say anything. Mr. Dando would just like to put up a fence for his young family. He would like some privacy.

He keeps up on the upkeep of his yard, but the yard touching where he wants to put the fence is constantly 2-3 feet high. He has complained a few times about it. Mr. Dando recently just learned that a local fireman purchased the property, and it is now a rental. Mr. Dando just wants to put a fence up and would like for it to get approved as soon as possible. Mr. Dando also made mention of the rental garages behind him.

Mr. Dando has all of the email communications he has had with Mr. Crowley for a year about this fence. He also has emails from the engineers and the response from the surveyor. Mr. Sollitto asked him for his location on the street to confirm the location. Pro Tem President Papalas asked Mr. Dando to give the packet of information that he has to the Service Director and Safety Director so that they can work on his issue and handle it. If he does not get a response, Pro Tem President Papalas said they will address that. Mayor Mientkiewicz asked for Mr. Dando's phone number and assured him that he will get a response. Mr. Dando provided the clerk, administration and members of council with the packet of information that he had prepared.

George Kuriatnyk: Mr. Kuriatnyk said that he has been waiting for 13 months to get a permit for his fence. He is getting ready to put it up with no permit. In response to the man who talked about the junk in the yard, Mr. Kuriatnyk said it is unacceptable for it to be going on this long. There are ordinances and laws in the city that need to be redone.

Mr. Kuriatnyk wanted to know if people are being charged an extra fee through Republic for bulk items. Some people say yes and others say no. Mayor Mientkiewicz said these bulk items and pick ups are included in the contract. He said they require a special pick up and there is a charge of \$20.00 for the first item and \$10.00 for the additional ones. The bulk pick up is on Wednesdays and you need to call Republic and schedule this ahead of time. If anyone needs the contact information to schedule this, Mayor Mientkiewicz said to call his office because his secretary has a phone number.

Next, Mr. Kuriatnyk brought up the festivals that cities have. The city used to have it's festival in the park and then it was moved downtown and now it is moved to the mall. Mayor Mientkiewicz called for a point of order and stated that he did not move Harry Stevens Day to the mall. It was moved by the committee. Mr. Sollitto interjected and said Harry Stevens is kinda a baseball fest. The idea is to go there and get a free ticket and watch the baseball game, and etc. He has been having conversations with the mayor about having something down the road, on top of this event. It will not happen this year but there are talks going on. Mayor Mientkiewicz said there are discussions.

Mr. Kuriatnyk wanted an update on the permits that Altobelli was supposed to get for the sidewalks. Law Director Zuzolo said he has applied for the permits, but he has not been approved for the permits. Next, Mr. Kuriatnyk wanted to know what is going on with Timbercreek. Mr. Sollitto said he meant to speak to Law Director Zuzolo on this. There seems to be a big uptick with assaults, shootings, drugs, etc. Law Director Zuzolo said he would need to discuss with Chief Holland on that matter.

Next, Mr. Kuriatnyk wanted clarification on the park ordinance. Ms. Smith explained the city received insurance money because the park building was broken into and now council needs to appropriate the money to fix the door and replace the tools. Mr. Kuriatnyk asked if anyone has been caught yet and it was stated that it was turned over to the police and it is an ongoing investigation. Finally, Mr. Kuriatnyk asked about the properties being annexed and Law Director Zuzolo said it is the Stillwagon properties because it had to be refiled.

COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS

NONE

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTION (Legislation began at 22:16 into recording)

The following drafts will be part of the consent agenda and passed together with suspension of three readings and as an emergency.

RESOLUTION NO. ____ (Draft No. 76-23)

PRELIMINARY PARTICIPATORY LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 77-23)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED CEMETERY FUND TO THE CEMETERY BUILDING REPAIRS ACCOUNT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 78-23)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED PARK FUND TO THE PARK TOOLS ACCOUNT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 79-23)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE UNAPPROPRIATED PARK FUND TO THE PARK BUILDING REPAIRS ACCOUNT AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

ORDINANCE NO. ____ (Draft No. 81-23)

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REPLACING ORDINANCE NO. 52-23 AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR A MATCHING GRANT FROM THE OHIO PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION (OPWC) FOR THE 2024 NILES STREET RESURFACING PROJECT; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Marchese, seconded by Julian to suspend the rule requiring three readings.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

Rules are suspended.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Smith to adopt the consent agenda.

YEAS: 7 NAYS: 0

These Drafts No. 76-23 through 79-23 and 81-23 have been adopted on the 7th day of June 2023.

RESOLUTION NO. _____(Draft No. 80-23)

A RESOLUTION INDICATING THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED FOR CERTAIN TERRITORY PROPOSED FOR ANNEXATION TO THE CITY OF NILES UPON ANNEXATION; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Marchese to suspend the rule requiring three readings.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 1 (Papalas)

Rules are suspended.

It was moved by Julian, seconded by Lastic to adopt this Draft no. 80-23.

YEAS: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 1 (Papalas)

This Draft No. 80-23 has been adopted on the 7th day of June 2023.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

(Miscellaneous remarks began at 25:26 into recording)

Mayor Mientkiewicz wanted to recognize the city cemetery crew for their work in preparing the cemetery for the Memorial Day service. There was a lot of work, time and energy put into making those grounds beautiful. Mayor Mientkiewicz did have the chance to venture out to other cities and communities comparing cemeteries and our city's cemetery was top notch. Mayor Mientkiewicz wanted to remind everyone that tomorrow is the first round of mosquito spraying. Information has been sent out to the local news stations and on the city website. They will also put out a NIXEL alert tomorrow morning as a reminder.

Next, Mayor Mientkiewicz announced there will be an electronic drop off on Saturday, June 17th from 12:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. in the police station parking lot. This is funded through a grant from Geauga Solid Waste District. This information was also put out to the news and was on the city's website and communicated through a NIXEL alert.

Finally, Mayor Mientkiewicz wanted to clear up a rumor that has been going around and was brought to his attention. Mayor Mientkiewicz stated that we are not a part of First Energy, and we are not selling our electric department to First Energy. And. The electric rates are not doubling like First Energy's customers are. We are a member of AMP OHIO, and we are able to enjoy our own rates. This is the way that it is going to remain. He wanted to put this rumor to rest.

Mr. Lastic wanted to echo the mayor's comments about Memorial Day. The cemetery department did a great job. He also wanted to mention the veterans. They put on a great presentation and a great show. That is the meaning of what Memorial Day is all about. He invited everyone who has not had a chance to attend in the past to please try and make it next year.

Ms. Marchese asked if there was an exact date as to when council will be back at the SCOPE Center. Mrs. Devorich said there is no exact date yet. They are still waiting on some things for IT. Mrs. Devorich said we should be back by the August meeting.

Ms. Smith echoed the mayor's comments and Mr. Lastic's comments about the services for Memorial Day. This beautiful service and presentation moves her every time. She said the grounds looked beautiful.

Mr. Sollitto said there are some trees from Kennedy Park that have fallen on Lincoln Way and laying in people's yards. He said the mayor is aware of this. Mr. Sollitto said the park director and law director are also involved and they are doing the survey to find out whose responsibility it is of the trees. Second, there is Utility meeting on June 14th @ 4:30 P.M. to answer questions about the lines and assets that are going to be put up for bid from our electric department.

Lastly, he encouraged everyone to attend the July 4th parade. The parade will be held on July 1st. Mr. Johnstone and Joe Merlo have a nice float in there to support the candidates.

Ms. Smith asked if the utility meeting was changed to a roundtable. Mr. Sollitto said the problem with a roundtable is that questions can't be asked. He doesn't want to have it and have people be able to ask questions. Mayor Mientkiewicz asked to request a roundtable either before or after the utility meeting. Mr. Sollitto is completely fine with that. It was agreed that there would be a roundtable on Wednesday, June 14th @ 4:00 P.M., prior to the utility meeting.

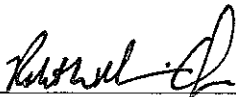
Pro Tem President Papalas thanked everyone for coming to the meeting today. He hopes everyone got something out of it. He appreciates those who came here this evening to speak because their concerns are important.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Smith, seconded by Sollitto to adjourn the meeting.



Nicole Bacak, Clerk of Council



Robert Marino Jr., President of Council