



The City Council Chronicle



Summer 2015



Seated

Matt Haag, At-Large | Carolee A. Conklin, At-Large
Loretta C. Scott, President, At-Large;

Jacklyn Ortiz, At-Large | Dana K. Miller, VP, At-Large

Standing

Michael A. Patterson, Northeast | Elaine M. Spaul, East
Carla M. Palumbo, Northwest | Adam C. McFadden, South

Inside City Council

A television program showcasing the efforts made by Rochester City Council members on behalf of the residents of the City of Rochester, New York.

Inside City Council airs on RCTV-15
Saturday @ 8pm &
Sunday @ 9pm



We are on **YouTube** now!

Username: Rochester City Council
<http://bit.ly/1Hvtlhr>

From the President's pen: *A note from Loretta Scott*

Last month we wrote to you about a new program we have been working on entitled "Inside City Council." This is an effort we have undertaken to continue our commitment to open government. The show gives viewers a look into the make up of City Council and its processes and functions. We are so pleased to have a partnership with RCTV Channel 15 for this project; and I was delighted to sit down with Carvin Eison, the general manager of RCTV, for the inaugural episode. We will release a new episode monthly as part of our ongoing partnership. Inside City Council will be another tool that the City Council will be able to use to communicate with our constituents and keep you informed of our work and the initiatives that Council spearheads.



Each member of City Council will appear on this program to discuss issues that are important to him or her and highlight the work that they are doing on behalf of the citizens of Rochester. In June I sat down with Councilmember Carolee Conklin, to discuss her role as the Finance Chair of the City Council, and the extensive Budget Review Process that she manages from that role. Stay tuned for upcoming episodes.



Rochester City Council **YouTube**

Community Supports Body Cameras

The City Council released a survey to the community in April of this year, to gather community input on the issue of police worn body cameras. The survey was available online and in print copy for three months before closing in the beginning of July. Members of the City Council brought surveys to community meetings, shared links on social media, and mailed surveys to those who requested them. In addition to the work done by City Council, churches, neighborhood associations and advocacy groups helped distribute surveys and spread the word. When the survey closed, Council was pleased that nearly 3,000 people took the survey allowing us to hear opinions

from a group diverse in age, race, and gender. The survey results are being evaluated, but it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the survey takers are in support of police worn body cameras. Results indicate that the community by and large feels that body cameras will: improve safety conditions for citizens as well as members of the Rochester Police Department, increase the transparency between the community and the Rochester Police Department, and also help officers in solving crimes. We want to thank everyone who participated in this survey and look forward to continuing to engage with the community as the City moves forward with this effort.



“From what I’m hearing in the community, consensus seems to be that we need these cameras, but what is most important now, is how we use them, who has access to them, and working out the details concerning all of the policy and procedures, that’s where we head next.”

**- Adam McFadden
Public Safety, Youth and
Recreation Committee, Chair**

Police worn body cameras have been at the height of public discussion in recent months. An ongoing dialogue about police and community relations is occurring in cities all over our country. We understand that these conversations are not always easy, but we are eager to be a part of them, and learn ways that we can improve the City of Rochester. Over the last several months constituents have been

coming to our monthly “Speak to Council” session to address the Council on this important topic; we are listening and responding. The 2015-16 Budget has called for a \$2 million investment in technology, and as a community we will work together to decide the policies that best fit our community. In Monroe County,

Gates Police Department and Fairport Police Department, have already implemented body worn cameras as part of their uniform. We will work to learn best practices regarding the use of this new technology as we focus on improving public safety.

Good Use
Of Tax
Payer
Money

Helps With
Police
Training

Positive
Impact on
Community
and RPD
Behavior

Arts Continue to Thrive in the Flower City



As Chair of the Council's Arts and Culture Committee, Elaine Spaul serves as your champion for the arts in our great City. Rochester has many wonderful events for people of all ages, everything from Party in the Park to the Fringe Festival and Bands on the Bricks to Gospel concerts. Rochester has too many festivals to only name a few. For more information on the various arts and culture events happening around town, visit www.cityofrochester.gov. The schedule is packed with great things to do for everyone. Here is just a small taste of what you'll find going on in Rochester over the next few months.

8.15.15

20th Anniversary Clarissa St. Reunion
10:00am - 9:30pm on Clarissa St.

Twilight Criterium

3:00pm - 10:30pm races throughout the day @ E. Broad St.

8.21.15 - 8.23.15

Puerto Rican Festival

Various Events: <http://prfestival.com/>

9.7.15

Labor Day Parade

Parade line up on East Ave.

9.17.15 - 9.28.15

Rochester Fringe Festival

Various Events: <http://rochesterfringe.com/>

Combating Open Air Drug Markets in Rochester

What is an Open Air Drug Market?

Open Air Drug Markets exist in communities throughout the City of Rochester with a high concentration in the Northeast. These Open Air Drug Markets consist of an individual or group of individuals who establish a presence within a neighborhood or street corner, for the purpose of conducting illegal drug sales. These markets can be highly elaborate with multiple participants working as look-outs and sellers. Regardless of the drug that is being sold, the negative impacts that these markets have on the community remain.



Just over a year ago, President Scott charged Councilman Mike Patterson to lead a task-force that explored the proliferation of Open Air Drug Markets in the City of Rochester; the goal of this task-force was to identify ways to combat and prevent these drug markets in our neighborhoods and craft a legislative response. Councilman Patterson is the Northeast Representative, where there is the highest concentration of these markets. The task force, headed by Councilmember Mike Patterson also includes: Councilmembers Adam McFadden, Carla Palumbo, and Jackie Ortiz, who are joined by members of the Rochester Police Department, City staff members, policy experts, and community members. A full copy of the report and recommendations will be issued soon.



How do Open Air Drug Markets impact neighborhoods?

The presence of such drug markets in the City creates considerable tension in the neighborhoods affected. The presence of these drug markets create areas that feel less safe and negatively impact the quality of life for the residents.

Young people do not feel safe to play outside.

Residents remain enclosed in their homes due to fear of violence.

Increased gang activity and violence may occur.

Property values may decline.

Crime, specifically burglary and robbery, increases.

Environmental conditions worsen, there is a noticeable increase in litter and unsafe and used drug paraphernalia.

Councilwoman Ortiz Highlights Rochester's Success

Recently Councilwoman Jackie Ortiz joined several City Staff members, at a the **Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference** in Detroit, MI. Councilwoman Ortiz was a panelist and discussed some innovative initiatives the City of Rochester is using to reclaim vacant properties, and encourage responsible and positive development.

The City of Rochester was increasingly using Tax Liens when individuals or businesses did not pay their taxes. A tax lien is when the City sells the debt from unpaid taxes to a company for a portion of the cost, and the company is able to collect the revenue that is owed. This practice has both positive and negative effects associated with it.

And through working with City residents, the neighborhood service centers, and community organizations, the City has been better able to find ways to use tax liens more effectively. In some cases the City will forgo the tax lien process and be able to foreclose on properties. This is a tool that the City is able to use when dealing with

abandoned and vacant properties in the City that are causing problems in our neighborhoods. In addition to this tool, the Rochester Land Bank has been created. The Land Bank is able to acquire problem properties, and make them ready for redevelopment.

What is a tax lien? A tax lien is when the City sells the debt from unpaid taxes to a company for a value less than the total debt. That company then collects the tax.



Changing Tax Liens & Correcting Negative Action to Benefit Neighborhoods

Excessive tax lien sales were making it difficult for property to turn over to new developers. Sometimes the system would create a state where properties were held in limbo and not able to be redeveloped, leaving vacant structures in our neighborhoods. The City worked with community groups to identify properties that were desirable for development and kept them from entering into tax lien sales.

The Positive Benefit from Tax Lien Sales

When the City sells tax liens to a company, that company is better able to work with the resident that is in need of assistance. The company may set up payment plans and be more flexible in their collection than the City. The City is moving away from relying solely on tax liens, but will continue to sell owner-occupied residential.

Upcoming Council Meetings

August 2015

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2015

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2015

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2015

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Do you want to:

Speak to Council

To sign up call:

(585) 428-7421

Speakers start at:

6:30 PM

Speak to Council is held immediately prior to Council Meetings and to speak you must sign up by 5:30 PM on the meeting day.



Denotes a City Council Meeting