

COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON

HELD:

Tuesday, April 14th, 2026

LOCATION:

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Maria McCool, RPR
Official Court Reporter

C O U N C I L M E M B E R S :

THOMAS SCHUSTER - PRESIDENT

PATRICK FLYNN, VICE PRESIDENT

MARK MCANDREW

JESSICA ROTHCHILD

SEAN MCANDREW

FRANK VOLDENBERG, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

THOMAS GILBRIDE, ESQ., COUNCIL SOLICITOR

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

MR. SCHUSTER: Please remain standing for a moment of silent reflection for our service men and women throughout the world and for those who have passed away in our community, especially Corporal Richard Bachman. Thank you. Roll call, Miss Carrera.

MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

DR. ROTHCHILD: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Sean McAndrew.

MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Present.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Mark McAndrew.

MR. MARK MCANDREW: Present.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Flynn.

MR. FLYNN: Here.

MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

MR. SCHUSTER: Present. Tonight before we start, Council wants to commend Officer Joe Flesher for his outstanding work in saving the life of one of our own members Mr. Emanuel Johnson from our Department of Public Works.

I would also like to point out that this is not the first time Officer Flesher has

1 performed life saving actions in the line of
2 duty for our city. I want to personally thank
3 him and state that he is a major asset to the
4 City of Scranton's Police Department as well as
5 thanking Mr. Johnson who is also an outstanding
6 member of the city's Department of Public
7 Works.

8 Recently Mr. McAndrew and I --
9 myself were invited by Chief Carroll to attend
10 an awards night for our heros in the Scranton
11 Police Department. It was a great event that
12 honored those officers that performed well in
13 the line of duty and for their families to see
14 them. So we're going to bring in Officer
15 Flesher and his family as well as Chief
16 Carroll.

17 **WHEREAS**, the Council of the City of
18 Scranton is desirous of honoring **Scranton**
19 **Patrol Officer Joseph Flesher**, who is
20 responsible for helping to save the life of a
21 City of Scranton Department of Public Works
22 (DPW) worker; and

23 **WHEREAS**, on February 9, 2026,
24 **Officer Flesher** responded to 415 E. Elm Street,
25 Scranton, for a report of a traffic accident

1 involving a DPW vehicle; and

2 **WHEREAS**, DPW employee Emanuel
3 Johnson had become pinned between a garbage
4 truck and a wrought iron fence. The tremendous
5 force and weight of the vehicle caused Mr.
6 Johnson's leg to be impaled on the metal
7 fencing, resulting in a life-threatening
8 injury; and

9 **WHEREAS**, **Officer Flesher**, arriving
10 on scene prior to EMS, assessed the severity of
11 the situation and recognized the urgent need
12 for decisive medical intervention, and

13 **WHEREAS**, without hesitation, **Officer**
14 **Flesher** applied a tourniquet above the puncture
15 wound to control the bleeding and stabilize Mr.
16 Johnson until advanced medical personnel
17 arrived. Mr. Johnson was transported to the
18 hospital where doctors performed emergency
19 surgery, and

20 **WHEREAS**, **Officer Flesher's** quick
21 thinking and immediate action in effectively
22 applying the tourniquet were instrumental in
23 saving Mr. Johnson's life. This event
24 exemplifies the highest standards of the law
25 enforcement profession and demonstrates an

1 unwavering commitment to protecting and serving
2 the community.

3 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that
4 on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, Scranton City
5 Council wishes to honor **Officer Joseph Flesher**
6 for demonstrating outstanding professionalism,
7 high-quality training, and calm composure by
8 acting quickly during this event.

9 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this
10 Proclamation be made a permanent part of the
11 Minutes of this Council, as lasting tribute to
12 **Officer Joseph Flesher**. Congratulations.

13 Please Dispense with the reading of
14 the minutes.

15 MR. VOLDENBERG: THIRD ORDER.

16 3-A. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM
17 CITY BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ON APRIL 6, 2026,
18 REGARDING QUARTERLY PAYROLL PREPARATION TAX
19 COLLECTIONS AS OF MARCH 31st, 2026.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: Are there any
21 comments on Third Order items? If not,
22 received and filed.

23 Do any Council members have any
24 announcements at this time?

25 MR. MARK MCANDREW: I have a quick

1 one. So, you know, what just happened was a
2 beautiful testament to one of Scranton's finest
3 and well -- well deserved. But also, you know,
4 there's a sad moment too where I want to offer
5 my thoughts and prayers and condolences to the
6 family of Corporal Richard Bachman that was a,
7 you know, city police officer that just
8 recently passed. So rest in peace and God
9 speed. That is all I have. Thank you.

10 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
11 Any other Council persons have announcements?

12 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes, I have one.
13 There's on Sunday and someone had mentioned it
14 last week too, so thank you for bringing it up.
15 But this coming Sunday there's going to be a
16 fundraiser for a police officer, Nancy Baumann
17 who I'm happy to personally know who is going
18 through her cancer journey right now.

19 So she could use all the help she
20 could get. And there's going to be a pasta
21 dinner. That will be from one to 5:00. You
22 could either get tickets in advance or to go or
23 you could eat there. There will be raffles and
24 baskets. That's going to be at the FOP Lodge
25 at 401 Railroad Avenue. Thank you.

1 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

2 MR. FLYNN: Yeah, I would just like
3 to also give my condolences to the family,
4 friends, former coworkers of Corporal Richard
5 Bachman, wonderful member of the force for many
6 years and will be greatly missed.

7 And I would also like to
8 congratulate Joseph Flesher, happy that we were
9 able to do this tonight to commend him on a job
10 well done saving the life of Manny Johnson and
11 a terrible situation that occurred.

12 And I'm glad to see that Manny was
13 able to come here tonight to also thank him for
14 what he did for him. So just happy that we
15 were able to do that tonight. That's all I
16 have.

17 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yeah, I also
18 want to thank and congratulate Officer Flesher.
19 It's no better way to start a meeting than
20 honoring people who do good things every day
21 here, so thank you.

22 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.

23 MR. VOLDENBERG: FOURTH ORDER.

24 CITIZENS PARTICIPATION.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: First up is Joan

1 Hodowanitz.

2 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
3 Scranton. What a nice way to start the
4 meeting. My only question is, where's Mayor
5 Cognetti on a night like this? Oh, she's
6 probably raising funds for her election. Okay,
7 never mind. I didn't say anything just --
8 that's a secret.

9 Okay, we're getting to that point in
10 the year where we should start working on the
11 audit for 2025. So expect me to periodically
12 be asking questions on the status. You know,
13 if we were following the Home Rule Charter,
14 that audit would have to be completed by May
15 31st.

16 But I'd be -- I'd be satisfied if
17 you could make it by September 30th again,
18 which is apparently the new deliverable date.

19 I hope that somebody is working on
20 typing the new DPW contract. You don't have to
21 really type it. They take the PDF file of the
22 old contract, take the agreement which says
23 replace this, add this. They're both
24 electronic. You cut and past, you know, ding
25 dang, dune, it's done, post it on the city's

1 website, you know.

2 I'm sure that, you know, all DPW
3 would like to see the completed contract and so
4 would most taxpayers. Speaking of money, have
5 we ever figured out what the pay raises for DPW
6 will run for the year 2026 since it wasn't
7 planned into the budget last year.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: We could get that.
9 The administration is going to be sending down
10 that other piece that's going to come prior to
11 July. So we get that information. But the
12 administration does have it.

13 MS. HODOWANITZ: Yeah, because
14 that's going to have to either come out of
15 contingency fund or workmen's comp or it's
16 going to have to be pulled from somewhere.

17 7-A, this water safety training,
18 have we ever figured whether or not there's a
19 cap and how much we're going to pay because I
20 have a schedule of fees but I didn't see a cap.

21 MR. SCHUSTER: No, I didn't see a
22 cap either. And they're looking for about 60
23 lifeguards.

24 MS. HODOWANITZ: Well, there's also
25 in the contract, you know, water safety

1 training for children and everything else. So
2 it's kind of open ended. I understand, you
3 know, you need X-number of lifeguards. And you
4 could, you know, pretty much factor that out.
5 Some will have to be recertified, some require
6 original training.

7 But no one's ever, you know, tried
8 to say, you know, we aren't going to exceed
9 this amount. The only reason I ask is, it's
10 not going to be a whole lot of money. But it's
11 something that we should be planning or for
12 future budgets, you know. We set aside a
13 minimum of X-dollars every year to do the same
14 thing.

15 Speaking of training lifeguards, I
16 took a walk today up to Nay Aug because the
17 weather was so beautiful. And I saw just
18 one -- one piece of equipment working near
19 where the pool would be.

20 My question is, have we heard from
21 Parks and Rec about what the schedule is for
22 opening the pools because it would be nice if
23 the kids could have some kind of swimming this
24 summer.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: So I did read that

1 off I'd say maybe a week or two ago. I don't
2 have it with me tonight.

3 MS. HODOWANITZ: Okay. I assume
4 it's not going to be for Memorial Day weekend
5 because the high school is still in session and
6 a lot of the lifeguards would be high school
7 students. But how about, you know, for the 4th
8 of July, you know, things of that nature?

9 MR. SCHUSTER: Yeah, they did say
10 they are coordinating with the school district.
11 So when the school gets out, the pools should
12 be opening for that period and also Memorial
13 Day, there's going to be a splash pad and a
14 pool open for Memorial Day from the answers
15 that we got.

16 MS. HODOWANITZ: It's been so long
17 since the kids had an opportunity to go
18 swimming, I'd love to see it done. And
19 tomorrow is the next meeting of the County
20 Commissioners. I'm still looking for -- they
21 promised me the list of names of anybody who
22 never had their property put on the tax rolls
23 and was picked up by Tyler Technologies, you
24 know.

25 And so when I get that, I'll give

1 you a copy. I will give a copy to my friends
2 at the Times-Tribune and anybody else who wants
3 a copy. That's all I have for tonight. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Next up
6 is Mike Mancini.

7 MR. MANCINI: Thank you, Council
8 President Schuster. Good evening, Council, and
9 residents of Scranton. Tonight, part six, my
10 version of the state of Scranton, the topic,
11 impacted.

12 The backbone of Scranton is its
13 residents. Hear or see something, say
14 something. When you care, these rules always
15 apply. When good people are impacted, others
16 appear because it's the right thing to do. The
17 recent loss of a retired police officer or
18 another one battling cancer, continued prayers
19 come to mind.

20 Two and a half years ago the city
21 witnessed a flood that impacted neighborhoods,
22 one that I would like to draw Council's
23 attention to is the flood that impacted
24 residents and homeowners near the city pumping
25 station behind the Lackawanna Little League.

1 The pumping station and water runoff
2 are the responsibility of the city. It's been
3 brought to my attention that a tree caused most
4 of the damage. Apparently the roots broke
5 through a city responsible terra cotta storm
6 pipe and backed up the waste water which caused
7 the pumping station to malfunction and not
8 operate properly.

9 The massive rainfall impacted the
10 families near the pumping station. The city
11 has an errors and omission insurance that would
12 cover hopefully all of the damage. There will
13 be copays by the city, however, it's the right
14 thing to do.

15 The statute of limitations start
16 from the date of the last action. The city
17 determined through their own investigation that
18 mother nature caused the flooding because of
19 the roots from a tree. With what's going on
20 nationally, can only hope for the best locally.

21 Locally, you can demand the best.
22 Best thing in the situation is to reach out to
23 the property owners, give them the insurance
24 information to start the claims to become as
25 whole as possible.

1 The city needs to contact the E and
2 O insurance provider and make them aware of the
3 situation. This Council also needs to demand
4 answers to these very same questions. Do I
5 expect this administration to become proactive
6 with the flooding that impacted the specific
7 area? Mistakes do happen. Fixing those
8 mistakes matter.

9 Prior to finding this unfortunate
10 issue, the pipe in question was never serviced.
11 This administration is great at collecting data
12 and doing nothing with it. Look at our roads.
13 The business administration was before Council
14 recently with the ninth DPW Director and third
15 party pave cut inspector.

16 They blamed an out-of-date ordinance
17 would no teeth as a reason for only five fines
18 causing poor maintenance with the pave cuts.
19 However, prior to being outsourced, the Mayor
20 and three rubber stampers, the city had no
21 problems issuing fines and receiving payment.

22 Repeatedly utilities acknowledged
23 the debt in their wrongdoing by issuing
24 payment. The excuse about no teeth with the
25 ordinance is only an extra -- is an excuse not

1 to act.

2 The proof is clear. Every
3 neighborhood has roads ripped to shreds, every
4 resident impacted while the utility and the
5 city administration make uses. This
6 administration had me hoping for a great movie
7 while receiving only a one star trailer.

8 It's time for the four of you to
9 show your teeth, demand results. The good
10 people of Scranton need to demand answers, look
11 for leaders, not trailers. Refuse to buy
12 excuses. You need to become more focused on
13 their future.

14 So tonight, I have two questions.
15 Where does the City Council now stand after
16 hearing the cause of the flooding near the city
17 responsible pumping station? Number two, do
18 you think our current ordinance for pave cut
19 maintenance needs teeth although millions in
20 fines were acknowledged with payment.

21 You know, great movies are made with
22 lots of input. How important were my questions
23 this evening? It's up to Council to show its
24 teeth. Next week, part seven, prepared to be
25 dazzled. Good evening, Council, and the good

1 people of Scranton.

2 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Mr. Les
3 Spindler.

4 MR. SPINDLER: Good evening,
5 Council, Les Spindler, city resident,
6 homeowner. I'm very saddened tonight. I
7 didn't know about Rich Bachman's passing. I
8 knew Rich for years, nicest guy you ever want
9 to meet. Oh, I'm very upset tonight.

10 My thoughts and prayers to his
11 family. He's a great guy. And he's going to
12 be missed. Next thing, the streets of this
13 city -- I live in Tripp Park. Euclid Avenue,
14 North Sumner, and Garfield in Tripp Park are
15 ridiculous.

16 I think there's underhanded deals
17 going on between Pennoni and the water company.
18 Those streets should be paved curb to curb.
19 There's pave cuts the length of the streets and
20 plus across the whole width of the street. And
21 they're bumpy as hell.

22 It's just -- I wish you people would
23 go up and drive on Euclid Avenue just once.
24 And Sumner's the same way. They're terrible.
25 Somebody's got to put their feet to the fire

1 and hold Pennoni responsible to do their damn
2 job because it's ridiculous driving those
3 streets every day.

4 Next thing, another thing, Green
5 Ridge Street bridge, somebody's got to hold
6 PennDOT's feet to the fire too now. They're
7 wasting their time doing stuff. Today they
8 were moving a dirt pile that's nowhere near the
9 bridge while they're still trying to put a
10 drainage system in the other side.

11 They weren't doing any of that.
12 They were just moving a stupid dirt pile,
13 loading it in trucks and taking it away. It
14 has nothing to do with the bridge.

15 Next thing, that project I brought
16 up last week at the bottom of Euclid Avenue
17 making it a one-way street, well, I talked to a
18 neighbor yesterday. I talked to a neighbor
19 today. The neighbor I spoke to yesterday, he
20 lives about a couple houses away from there.

21 He said people are going down the
22 wrong way and somebody's going to get killed
23 there. I mean, people are coming up off Main
24 Avenue and people are still -- he said they're
25 going up on the sidewalk to go around. And

1 another neighbor I spoke to today, his daughter
2 was almost hit head on yesterday.

3 She was coming up the right way.
4 Somebody was coming the other way which they
5 shouldn't have been. This was a terrible idea.
6 Shouldn't this have been brought to Council?
7 That stupid streetscape project was brought to
8 Council. I thought projects like that had to
9 come before Council.

10 Why is the Mayor circumventing you
11 people? Something's got to be done. The wall
12 they put that's going to put the sign -- the
13 sign's going to be on to welcome everybody to
14 West Scranton, that's nice. They put -- the
15 retaining wall is up. But making it a one way,
16 it's a mistake.

17 Next thing, again, the kratom.
18 There was a big article in the paper Sunday. I
19 said last week -- I said, you got to ban that
20 substance. I mean, in 2011 none of you were on
21 Council when Council then banned bath salts,
22 which was a good idea.

23 We don't need something on our
24 streets that's going to make a person act like
25 a lunatic with a machete and killing two

1 people -- two women and a dog. We don't need
2 that in our city.

3 And as I said last week, the state's
4 dragging their feet. So I think Council should
5 go to DA Gallagher, at least have him go to
6 County Commissioners, at least make it a
7 countywide ban. I think that's better than
8 just in the city. I said last week, if it's
9 banned in the city, they could go to Dunmore or
10 Taylor, not a big deal. But if they had to go
11 to another county, at least, that's further
12 away.

13 I brought this up before, the
14 parking on 7th Avenue by Scranton High School,
15 I went by today at 2:30. There's a bus stop
16 there for a bus to park. After the bus stop,
17 it's no parking.

18 There's signs. People park
19 illegally from that sign to the entrance to
20 Scranton High School and nothing -- where's our
21 parking enforcement people? What are they
22 doing?

23 They gave me a ticket because I
24 parked the wrong direction in front of my house
25 a few years ago. That wasn't a -- I wasn't

1 bothering anybody. These people park and
2 they're halfway out into the lane of traffic.
3 Something's got to be done. I brought this up
4 many times.

5 Lastly, the old Rite Aid on Main
6 Avenue in West Side, does anybody know what's
7 going in there?

8 MR. MCANDREW: True Value, I
9 believe.

10 MR. SPINDLER: Okay. I was
11 wondering if you -- I knew it. I was wondering
12 if anybody knew because I just found out
13 yesterday it's going to be True Value Hardware.
14 Well, at least -- that's another taxpaying
15 company going in there. That's a good thing
16 for the city.

17 I'll probably be frequenting that
18 place because I don't live far away. I'm out
19 of time. See you next week. Thank you for
20 your time.

21 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Mr.
22 Voldenberg, last year there was some utility
23 work that was done all along Euclid Avenue.
24 And I know the West Side Gateway Project that's
25 occurring right now, it does have pavement

1 restoration.

2 Can we find out if pavement
3 restoration of Euclid from Main Avenue up until
4 at least Court Street, is that going to be part
5 of the restoration from the utility work or is
6 it part of the -- possibly the West Scranton
7 Gateway Project.

8 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll find out, sir.

9 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Next up
10 is Louis Labrowski.

11 MR. LABROWSKI: Me and my friend,
12 Jerry McCormick had made an interesting
13 statement to me that the homeless people are
14 having problems finding lodging and stuff that
15 they're just not -- I was thinking, why can't
16 we have some kind of a fundraiser or something
17 that we could put together through -- give some
18 money towards something where if they get to a
19 shelter they could stay in the morning and
20 maybe have a tea or have something that he
21 could -- you know, I'm a Vietnam veteran and
22 we have a lot of veterans that are homeless.

23 There's a man down in going towards
24 80, him and his wife had purchased a whole
25 building and they renovated it. And he said he

1 had certain fundraisers to do it. And now the
2 people have a place to do their hygiene and
3 everything else.

4 And I took care of 5,000 Vietnamese
5 refugees at camp (inaudible). I know what it
6 is to be without them. Me and my buddy Jerry
7 went up to -- they said, well, you got to be
8 careful. These people are laying on the
9 ground. And these people served their country.
10 They deserve dignity, not the way they are
11 getting -- I think they should be able to have
12 some kind of life, you know, give them some
13 kind of an attention to detail.

14 But like I said, it all depends on
15 money and everything else. But money is
16 nothing if you don't have the people to --
17 backing and the people that could do things and
18 feel like, you know, they're -- give them back
19 their life, give them back their dignity.
20 That's what I'm saying.

21 And it's just one of the things. He
22 showed me -- the guy showed me. He said, I'm
23 here. I'm not a veteran. I was going to the
24 VA -- I have an appointment tomorrow. But he
25 said I have a homeless veteran with me. He

1 showed me the building itself was full of mold
2 and everything.

3 He -- him and his wife together
4 worked and put the building back together
5 again, had the people come in. And they
6 don't just throw them out the morning and say,
7 okay, you got to leave now, you know? They
8 gave them something. They gave them back their
9 dignity, gave them back their -- they deserve
10 more than that.

11 They deserve to be helped. All they
12 want to do is to be helped. And I know it's
13 sometimes there's a lot of things in your life
14 that seem to be more important, but to a person
15 that sees a man laying on the ground in the
16 rain and sleet and snow and not having a place
17 to get up and, you know, feel like they're part
18 of society again, give them back their dignity.

19 That's all I'm saying. Like I told
20 Jerry, I said, well, we just got to be careful
21 because we don't know, like, you approach
22 somebody up there, they might think you are
23 there to harm them and they might do something.
24 But I had three coats. I gave them to Jerry.

25 He went up. I couldn't go up in my

1 condition of my leg. And he went up and gave
2 them to this homeless veteran. And he was at
3 least maybe he has one warm night, one night
4 that he has, you know, something that he could
5 hold onto that he could stay warm and feel like
6 he's a part of society again, instead of making
7 them feel they're an outcast.

8 Nobody's an outcast. They just
9 don't have the opportunity one of them
10 people -- and I think -- I think if we had a
11 fundraiser or something where we could even
12 like a bingo or something or whatever, whatever
13 we could do and obtain a building where we
14 could have this and not throw them out in the
15 morning like they're cattle.

16 You know, it's not -- it's not
17 right. It's not right, and especially if it's
18 a veteran. I mean, we served our country
19 honorably and we deserve more than to be thrown
20 out in the cold and in the damp. So I just
21 want -- my buddy brought -- he's very -- and
22 his friend Judy, very, very good person.

23 She does so much for the homeless
24 and everything. And being a -- his friend, I
25 took an interest in it because I saw a man

1 laying on the ground. I wouldn't want my
2 father or my mother or anybody else laying on
3 the ground, you know, when they could have
4 someplace where they to go and have hygiene and
5 everything else. So that's all I have.

6 MR. MCANDREW: What's your name
7 again, sir?

8 MR. LABROWSKI: Louis Labrowski.

9 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Thank you --
10 thank you for your service, Mr. Labrowski. And
11 secondly, you know, I always say that some of
12 the best ideas we get are from our residents.

13 And if, Mr. Voldenberg, can you
14 craft an e-mail or a letter and send it to the
15 homeless task force, you know, with this
16 gentleman's recommendation? Our community
17 always steps up for fundraisers and helping
18 each other because -- and they've been meeting
19 for a couple years.

20 And I didn't hear any ideas like
21 this coming from them. So maybe if you could
22 please send that over to them and see if that's
23 an option or something we could do.

24 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll submit that,
25 Mr. McAndrew.

1 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Thank you.

2 MR. SCHUSTER: Up next is Len
3 Srebro.

4 MR. SREBRO: Boy, that's a long walk
5 around there. Good evening, Council, Lenny
6 Srebro, Keyser Valley. Miss me? You know,
7 what Mr. Mancini talked about, you know,
8 certainly sounds good. But I want to say my
9 feelings about it.

10 You know, it's good that he
11 discovered that information. But you guys
12 ain't going to do nothing about it. That's my
13 experience. You know I've been coming here 13
14 years now, you know, discussing the problem
15 with the flooding in Keyser Valley.

16 What I've come to believe that after
17 a while people just give up trying to discuss
18 this flood problem. And, you know what, after
19 13 years, I give up too. I used to come here
20 every other week in the past trying to do
21 things, getting information, dealing with
22 different people, engineers, and every other
23 kind of title that would come out and look.

24 You know what, I do got to say,
25 Paige came out there a number of times to look

1 at the problem. I give her credit for that.
2 But once again, nothing gets done. Now,
3 something did get done recently in the late
4 fall of last year.

5 They came and they did some new
6 pipes and a culvert or two. But, you know,
7 we've yet to see if anything works what they
8 did if it's another patch job. And we won't
9 know until we have another flooding problem.

10 But that's my opinion, you know.
11 That's why I stopped coming. You guys have
12 worn me out. The neighbors, that's why they
13 stopped coming too. I guess it's the plan to
14 wear people out. But you did it to me. So --
15 so a little bit of time left, I got other
16 things to talk about.

17 At my property, one of the neighbors
18 parked one of those pod storage containers
19 right in front of my property. It's been there
20 for almost two years. They started to do a
21 kitchen remodeling and then that just stopped
22 going on.

23 You know what, my fiance' of 15
24 years, we plan on getting married in the late
25 spring and, you know what, she doesn't want

1 that pod in our wedding pictures. You know, so
2 I've talked to the neighbor, you know, about
3 what are you doing with it, you know?

4 There's so much debris piled up in
5 front of it that, you know, nobody is even
6 using it. It's just there like an abandoned
7 car. Don't I have some kind of rights to have
8 it removed, you know --

9 MR. MARK MCANDREW: I know we have
10 an ordinance. What's the street again?

11 MR. SREBRO: The corner of Lafayette
12 and North Merrifield.

13 MR. MARK MCANDREW: All right. I
14 know we have an ordinance that's a little --
15 it's not very concrete with regard to these
16 pods because they came after the ordinance.
17 This has been brought up before. But I know
18 it's -- sometimes the company they just -- they
19 don't pick them up too.

20 I'm not defending this. But, Mr.
21 Voldenberg, can you send code enforcement over?
22 And, you know, ask with regards -- what is the
23 ordinance for pods if it's --

24 MR. SREBRO: Okay, wait a minute. I
25 need to get in one more --

1 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Go ahead. I'm
2 sorry.

3 MR. SREBRO: -- one more thing on my
4 short time. Okay, another personal problem is,
5 what can I do about another neighbor across the
6 street from me, he feeds the stray cats. I
7 counted 11 cats at one time on his porch. And
8 there was still others running around.

9 The thing of it is, is my fiance' is
10 into flowers like I'm into cars. And she has
11 flowers -- a whole bed all around the whole
12 house that the cats come over and poop in the
13 flower beds constantly.

14 What can I do about that? Now, I've
15 called animal control no exaggeration, 20
16 times. They're supposed to give me a call
17 back. Never one call back. So isn't there
18 something we could do, you know? They don't
19 call me. But can somebody else from the city
20 take care of it?

21 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you,
22 Mr. Serbro. Frank, can we make sure that those
23 two concerns get brought up to the proper --

24 MR. VOLDENBERG: We will. We'll
25 escalate both.

1 MR. SCHUSTER: The pods too, whether
2 it be code enforcement or SPD and let them know
3 it's been there for two years.

4 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll reach out
5 tomorrow.

6 MR. SREBRO: Thanks for anything.

7 MR. SCHUSTER: And thank you for
8 keeping Keyser Valley alive with the flood
9 project over there as well. Next up is Stan
10 Dombrowski.

11 MR. DOMBROWSKI: Good evening, Stan
12 Dombrowski, Olive Street resident. I'm here
13 today as a responsible kratom consumer and past
14 owner of a T shop on Ash Street from 2017 to
15 2020. My shop was one of the first retail T
16 shops that sold and educated consumers on the
17 use of kratom in Pennsylvania.

18 I sold kratom to hundreds of
19 customers speaking to each one of them about
20 why they had an interest in using the product.
21 My goal was always to educate customers through
22 my story and then the stories of each before
23 them.

24 So when I speak about my experience
25 with kratom, it's also through my contact with

1 hundreds of other consumers, many were
2 longtime customers. Today I respectfully
3 oppose the proposed blanket ban and urge to you
4 place only the age gate ordinance that
5 restricts sales to anyone under 21.

6 After a severe back injury, I became
7 addicted to prescription opioids prescribed by
8 my physician. I was only able to stop using
9 prescribed opioids by using kratom. It was the
10 only thing that let me manage my pain without
11 losing my ability to work and care for my
12 family.

13 It has also helped me with a
14 longstanding mental health challenge in ways
15 that prescription medications never could.
16 Most importantly it fits my goal of staying on
17 a natural wellness path, a simple plant based
18 option that lets me be productive and present
19 every single day.

20 I fully support keeping kratom out
21 of the hands of minors as I said previous. The
22 first ordinance does exactly that. And it's
23 the right move. But a total ban on all sales
24 to adults would take away a safe effective tool
25 for thousands of responsible people like me who

1 use it responsibly and legally.

2 We know the federal government is
3 already cracking down on the concentrated
4 synthetic 7-OH products. That targeted
5 enforcement is the smart approach. A blanket
6 ban here in Scranton would not only stop those
7 synthetics, it would also -- it would only
8 punish law abiding local consumers.

9 Worse, these bans tend to spread
10 from city to city creating a patchwork of
11 restrictions that hurt families and neighboring
12 towns as well. Scranton has a chance to lead
13 instead of follow. By passing the age gate
14 ordinance and rejecting the blanket ban, you
15 could show the region what science-based common
16 sense regulation looks like.

17 Protect kids, respect adult choice,
18 and keep our communities from repeating the
19 mistakes of overly broad prohibitions that
20 don't solve the real problem. Since 2018,
21 we've seen a lot of synthetic kratom trends
22 come and go that have left our community under
23 attack.

24 But 7-OH has by far been the worst.
25 The synthesized product is far from the leaf

1 that many have come to know and use. It's 2 to
2 400 times as strong and market very same as
3 regular leaf kratom. It's known to be stronger
4 than morphine.

5 There's nothing natural about that.
6 But somehow companies can make these illicit
7 products that any gas station in our towns will
8 put on a shelf without repercussion making them
9 appear to be natural and safe. I get calls
10 from former customers now addicted to this
11 synthetic form asking for help.

12 Overall, the conversation really
13 needs to be directed at regulation. As I said,
14 just like any reputable industry, there needs
15 to be lab testing, reliable vendors, and
16 products that contain natural amounts of the
17 active natural ingredient.

18 Age restriction and clear packaging
19 are the last piece of the puzzle. Keeping this
20 plant in the natural state is the key, not
21 using harsh chemicals to make a completely
22 unsafe version. A recent study from John
23 Hopkins said that kratom should be reconsidered
24 from being a scheduled one drug anywhere in
25 this country.

1 They cited negative claims as being
2 fear mongering due to misinformation and a lack
3 of education. Natural and safe versions of
4 kratom is being confused with adulterated
5 products claiming to be kratom.

6 To summarize, federal enforcement
7 action against concentrated synthetic 7-OH is
8 imminent. I urge Scranton City Council to
9 approve only the age gate ordinance which
10 prohibits kratom sales to minors.

11 A blanket ban proposal spreads and
12 threatens surrounding cities and municipalities
13 with law abiding kratom consumers. This ban
14 would possibly lead to the use of dangerous and
15 deadly substances.

16 Scranton has the opportunity to be a
17 regional leader by implementing science based
18 regulatory policy instead of overly broad bans.
19 Please make an educated decision. Thank you.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Next is
21 Ron Ellman.

22 MR. ELLMAN: Good evening, Council.
23 I thought I was going to spare you tonight.
24 But I got to go to Lowe's. And I thought I'd
25 come anyway. You know, it always seems like

1 there's something comes up to mess up your
2 budget.

3 Last month we had to get a new
4 refrigerator. The other one wasn't too old.
5 Today we got a new dryer. And I guess Rose
6 said it was 20 years old. I don't remember.
7 But I have to go get a plug for it. You people
8 are just so outside of reality of thousands in
9 this very city.

10 I know we talked about this before.
11 But this -- so many people suffering. Then you
12 have -- all of these outside things besides
13 taxes. I think these data centers are --
14 there's just no way -- this whole area can
15 subsidize all of these -- their needs, the
16 water, electricity, and the expenses will go to
17 the people for wiring to them and so forth.

18 There's all of these promises it
19 won't happen, but it will. But I forgot what
20 day it was last week on the news, they had
21 quite a discussion about a large number of
22 people -- I don't know what you call it. The
23 paper -- the news called it a disease to the
24 electricity and can't be subjected to it.

25 They had one lady moved out in the

1 middle of nowhere. And evidently it's a
2 serious problem. And it's not a rarity in this
3 country. And I never heard nothing about it
4 until I saw the newscast.

5 I guess -- I guess it's the sound
6 waves from electric motors and so forth that
7 have a terrible affliction on many, many people
8 according to the news article.

9 To me, cancer is a disease. Sound
10 waves hit, you -- aren't a disease, but they
11 termed it that way. I think somebody with a
12 computer needs to really look into it because I
13 don't know what I'm talking about except it was
14 very interesting.

15 There's just no way in God's green
16 earth we could have all of these people buying
17 property. And the next thing that'll happen,
18 they'll be forcing these data centers down our
19 throat saying they got property. You could see
20 it coming.

21 Anybody in the real estate business
22 knows the future of these things will be here.
23 And it will be at our expense, not theirs.
24 While I think of it, on Joan's list, I wonder
25 if she got my friend Joe Cochran.

1 He bought a piece of property in
2 August, 2010. Last Christmas, December, it was
3 still tax exempt, 14 East Parker at the bridge.
4 I've mentioned it a couple of times. And I
5 have some interesting paperwork. Maybe I
6 should bring it so, you know what I'm -- what
7 this man has done.

8 And one other thing, Rosie is always
9 asking me if Miss Jeffries comes. And I said I
10 haven't seen her since she got that award.
11 Does anybody know if she's ill or something?

12 MR. SCHUSTER: She had moved to
13 outside of the Philadelphia area with her
14 family.

15 MR. ELLMAN: She always made an
16 outstanding contribution to me. Thank you.

17 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Up next
18 is Judy Laske.

19 MS. LASKE: Good evening, Council,
20 Judy Laske, resident of Scranton. I'm here
21 again about the homeless. I just want to give
22 you little updates on what's been going on with
23 them. They were over there I believe it was
24 last week.

25 And I went over and talked to them,

1 got some new, you know, people over there so I
2 was talking to them to find out what, you know,
3 their situations were.

4 And there was one gentleman in a
5 wheelchair who had two strokes. He went to
6 Geisinger up at CMC and, you know, they only
7 keep you for so long. And he said that
8 basically he had nowhere to go to recuperate.
9 And then there's a girl that was supposed to
10 come tonight.

11 I don't know if she feels kind of --
12 I told her not to be intimidated, like, that
13 you guys are here for her, here for anybody
14 that needs it. She's going to try to come next
15 week. But she texted me and let me know that
16 where they're staying at, they keep getting
17 kicked out of where they're putting tents up.

18 So they find one spot and then they
19 are getting kicked out. They put no
20 trespassing signs up. I know down on Mount
21 Pleasant, there was a couple of the homeless
22 that I've grown to know and they said that,
23 like, the one gentleman, God love him, he was
24 over there the last time.

25 And there was nothing -- they all

1 smoke. And they didn't have an ashtray. So
2 they were, like, asking everybody, like, where
3 did the ashtray go? So I went over the house,
4 got one, you know, a container with a lid on
5 it.

6 And he couldn't have been more
7 grateful. He did not want to throw out the
8 cigarette butts out in front of Weston or in
9 the road. Like, they're not all there because
10 they want to be there. There are some that are
11 there that, you know, they're down on their
12 luck.

13 There's another girl, the girl that
14 I was just speaking of -- I got off topic, I'm
15 sorry. She has to have surgery. She's had two
16 previous surgeries. My concern for her is,
17 where does she go to recuperate after that? Is
18 she going to go back out into the woods, like,
19 where it's raining. It's hot out.

20 You know, now it's getting hot. You
21 know, there could be some chilly nights, like,
22 where does she go to recuperate? There's no
23 place for these people to go. She also told me
24 that at CIC as of May 1st is only serving lunch
25 to them.

1 They do take showers there. They do
2 receive a meal there. I am going to go down to
3 CIC and see what I could do to help out. But
4 is there, like, any grants or anything that,
5 like, you guys could apply for to, like, maybe
6 get some kind of a building?

7 I'm more than willing to volunteer.
8 I'm sure Jerry and Lou. But I did tell them,
9 like, I've come to know these people over the
10 years. Some I would not put my back to them,
11 okay. They have a lot of mental illnesses.

12 Some of them don't. Some of them
13 want to work. Some of them don't. Some of
14 them are becoming so accustomed to being out in
15 these elements that it's like every day, like,
16 an occurrence. It's just like us going home to
17 our homes and going to bed.

18 That's their home. That's their
19 bed. That's where they stay. That's where all
20 of their belongings are. And this young
21 gentleman that asked me where the ashtrays
22 were, he went down -- I guess they got all
23 kicked out from where they were staying.

24 I came to find out that he was
25 arrested the next day because it was daytime,

1 and when they got kicked out it was nighttime.
2 So he wanted to go back for his belongings and
3 they arrested him.

4 Like, I don't get that. You know, I
5 understand out of sight, out of mind. For me,
6 they're in sight all the time to me. I run
7 into them in the stores. I'm very cordial with
8 them. They trust me. And that's why I'm here,
9 not, you know, saying that you guys aren't
10 trying to help, but, like, what is going on
11 with this unhoused task force because nobody's
12 reached out to me.

13 And if there's no such thing, then
14 I'm telling you right now, I'm going to start
15 something. I'm going to start some kind of a
16 movement where I'll get volunteers. I'll get
17 people involved that want to help them because
18 I just can't stand back and sit back and watch
19 them, like, go through this stuff.

20 They're human beings. Like Lou
21 said, like, they deserve their dignity. They
22 really do. And if you got to know them which I
23 really have, like, you know, this young girl
24 that's going to go for surgery and stuff, she
25 worked at Wal-Mart. She worked at Giant. She

1 was doing Ubering.

2 And unfortunately her car is broke
3 down right now. So she can't even do that to
4 try to make some money. Like, I don't know
5 what's out there. Like, I don't know -- I'm
6 new to this. So I don't know what I could do
7 to help them.

8 Like, anything with autism, I know
9 all about it. I have four kids with autism.
10 So I know how to help them get the resources.
11 I'm new to this, but I don't want to back down
12 from this. They know I could help -- they know
13 I'm here to help him.

14 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Later in
15 the month of April, there is supposed to be an
16 unhoused task force -- or a homeless task force
17 committee meeting. I don't know when that date
18 is. Did we ever get the date on that?

19 MS. LASKE: Do you know where it's
20 going to be?

21 MR. VOLDENBERG: I believe it's the
22 29th. I'll double-check.

23 MR. SCHUSTER: The 29th, so the 29th
24 there's going to be a committee meeting.

25 MS. LASKE: Where?

1 MR. SCHUSTER: I believe it would be
2 at City Hall. I don't know if people from the
3 public are welcome to come. But that's
4 something that I believe is being discussed.
5 Councilwoman Rothchild, did you say it was
6 being discussed?

7 DR. ROTHCHILD: They are typically
8 held virtually. And the public has not been
9 invited to come to them in the past. They're
10 not public meetings. However, I want to urge
11 them to create some sort of committee that the
12 public can be a part of because like yourself,
13 there are a lot of people who want to find any
14 way that they can to help.

15 And I want us to figure out how we
16 can -- how we can do that. So that's going to
17 be an important topic of conversation at the
18 next meeting.

19 MR. SCHUSTER: And in terms of grant
20 funding, an existing entity or a non profit
21 that would need to start up would need to get a
22 business plan together to apply for grants
23 through the city. So any of those agencies
24 that are out there that are helping, I'm sure
25 could apply and work with the city to apply for

1 grants.

2 MS. LASKE: Okay. Mr. McAndrew, you
3 said that I should be on that unhoused task
4 force?

5 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yeah, and I
6 asked -- I brought it up again last week
7 because I was -- wasn't sure when the next
8 meeting -- I heard April. And I wasn't sure
9 when it was going to occur because we're never
10 told when they actually are.

11 And we kind of find out afterwards.
12 I did inquire about you and the other poor
13 young lady that was here, you know, a month
14 ago. And unbeknownst to me, Dr. Rothchild said
15 they're putting together a committee. So I,
16 right, is that what you -- the information --

17 MS. LASKE: I'd like to be on it.

18 DR. ROTHCHILD: That's going to be a
19 suggestion --

20 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Oh, so you're
21 going to suggest that. Oh, okay, because when
22 I did ask initially, like, we receive most of
23 our inquiries when we bring them up in 5th
24 Order. And I initially brought that up.

25 And I really didn't get a straight

1 answer. We'll look into it. So this was way
2 before --

3 MS. LASKE: Can I give you my phone
4 number so that maybe you could reach out to me
5 or whoever can --

6 MR. MARK MCANDREW: I'll be -- I'll
7 be the last to find out. I don't know if
8 it's --

9 DR. ROTHCHILD: I'd love to have
10 your contact information if you could provide
11 it to Kathy there.

12 MS. LASKE: I'll do that. I'll do
13 that after the meeting.

14 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

15 MS. LASKE: Thank you very much.

16 MR. SCHUSTER: Would anyone else
17 like to address Council?

18 MR. COYNE: Tom Coyne, Minooka. If
19 you need a committee to make changes, then the
20 unsheltered task force has no purpose. Moving
21 on tonight, good evening, Council. I'm glad in
22 the Scranton Times, in particular, the opinion
23 section of the editorial board media news group
24 NEPA picked up on my kratom point and stated
25 the question that I asked was ridiculous and

1 obviously I knew it.

2 They noted that it should be a state
3 change and not a local one. And they got my
4 callback to alcohol and prohibition. More --
5 more point to the times of the movie refer
6 madness and the demonizing of marijuana and the
7 wholesale fear without good cause banned its
8 use for people who were suffering from cancer
9 and chemotherapy, those who were suffering from
10 extreme anorexia or even pain management in
11 offering it as comfort and use, in end of life
12 hospice situations because we must restrict the
13 use of morphine and opioids at the end of life
14 for some reason because a terminal hospice
15 patient may become addicted.

16 Marijuana was called out because it
17 was supposedly a gateway drug and outright ban
18 before legislative evaluation could be done.
19 Kratom can assist in weaning off opioids like
20 OxyContin. And it appears to have a similar
21 affect to methadone for heroin.

22 But I do not hear anyone suggesting
23 a methadone ban. The panic borne is borne from
24 legitimate fears of over the counter
25 unregulated substances, especially designer

1 drugs that exploded more or less when crack
2 became unpopular.

3 The biggest issue in the designer
4 drugs was when they banned one type that
5 produces chemically change the structure and it
6 was no longer banned because it was no longer
7 the same drug and that's still an issue. Every
8 drug is a designer drug, just upcharged and
9 controlled by pharmacies.

10 The place where logic and
11 restrictions and the absurdity of refer madness
12 and its knee-jerk policy slides sideways is
13 when in federal law both OxyContin and fentanyl
14 are classified as schedule two drugs that are
15 less restrictive than marijuana.

16 The US Department of Health and
17 Human Service recommended in July only
18 synthetic 7-OH be classified as schedule one
19 and a controlled substance. This passage as
20 stands, it will be easier to get OxyContin than
21 getting kratom.

22 In the US, we have local restrictive
23 examples, Arkansas, dry counties where you
24 have to drive to another county to pick up
25 alcohol. In Philadelphia, the excuse of public

1 health they have a soda tax. For a two liter
2 bottle of soda, there's a \$1.01 tax on every
3 bottle.

4 The result of the ban, anyone with a
5 car drove outside of the city Philadelphia and
6 shopped outside the city limits. Who did it
7 impact, the poor in the communities the
8 hardest.

9 They are quite a few examples of
10 safety restrictions being put in place. I
11 lived through bans of spray paint cans without
12 ID, bans on glue, sales to minors as huffing
13 for a period of time had its time. Even
14 cigarettes, alcohol, and vaping had age
15 restrictions, reasonable and for the most part
16 they work.

17 Moving onto a less historical review
18 and more fact based, every year 3,000 people
19 die to a designer drug. It's over the counter,
20 sold in mini markets, supermarket, and it's
21 even in hotels. It's in our schools. Kids can
22 purchase it freely and it's unregulated. 3,000
23 deaths a year, yes, it's Asprin.

24 An estimated 1.7 million Americans
25 age 12 and older used kratom in 2021.

1 According to a substance abuse and mental
2 health services administration national survey
3 on drug use and health.

4 Lackawanna County Corner Tim Rowland
5 stated that in the past five years, two deaths
6 were directly attributed to kratom. And
7 multiple deaths also had other substances
8 present which other drugs in the system could
9 have been the reason why they died.

10 Two deaths in five years versus
11 15,000 for Asprin. In one year of the CDC,
12 kratom has been involved in 233 deaths, and of
13 that, 184 were from multiple drugs. So it's
14 undetermined on that from what killed them.
15 That 49 deaths of kratom alone in 2025 for the
16 entire United States, less than one a state.

17 Again, we're looking at a regulation
18 of a product that an estimated 1.7 million
19 Americans age 12 and older use that has caused
20 49 deaths in the United States. We're trying
21 to regular 2,000ths of a percent. Good night.

22 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Would
23 anyone else like to address Council?

24 MR. MORGAN: Good evening, Council,
25 Lee Morgan. I didn't get a chance yet to give

1 the Council the letter because I'd like a
2 response to my request to the Council in
3 writing. But I forgot it today and left it
4 home. But part of it had to do with feral
5 cats. And you've heard the discussions here
6 today.

7 So I'm going to ask the Council to
8 give me all of my answers in writing so that --
9 and if you refuse, then we'll see where we go
10 from there and see if you've actually done
11 anything with my requests or if the Mayor's
12 actually done anything with my requests because
13 I think people have a right to petition their
14 government, citizens, and citizens have a right
15 to an answer and whether the Court will agree
16 with me or not, let's find out.

17 The other thing I have for the
18 people in the city is that I've done a notice
19 of appeal for the third circuit in regards to
20 ECTV. And I just want to let everybody know
21 that some people have asked me about -- they
22 couldn't find the docket.

23 Well, I assure you that it is there
24 and it has all been filed. And it's
25 3-23-CV-1635. And it does exist. And I think

1 that everybody should see just how corrupt
2 Scranton's government really is.

3 When you read the legislation that
4 created the public access channels, the public
5 access channels were designed to give the
6 people a voice in their community. And one of
7 my questions to the Court is, did the city hand
8 ECTV over to a third party to block free
9 speech?

10 Because that's a constitutional
11 right. And I really think that it did. And
12 when you read the legislation that the Congress
13 and the Senate created, that was one of the
14 whole reasons for the channel to exist. And a
15 lot of issues that we're here trying to be
16 discussed for five minutes, deserve hours of
17 time on a public access channel to get the
18 elected officials to finally respond to the
19 deep-seated problems we have in this city.

20 We have over 110 million dollar
21 budget, and the city's collapsing. You know,
22 we've had discussions here about the homeless
23 forever. And then recently we tore a building
24 down down the street. It could have been a
25 shelter. It would have been rehabbed.

1 You know, there's questions about,
2 you know, if the Mayor had a relationship with
3 anybody on the board of the bank. We could
4 have bought the new building that Southern
5 Union built in downtown Scranton for a million
6 and a half dollars.

7 We could have bought the credit
8 union for a million and a half dollars. They
9 were modern buildings. There's something wrong
10 here. We've got -- just public officials that
11 are either corrupt or stupid.

12 Now, I hope that everybody would go
13 to the website for the federal court and look
14 up my statements of issues presented because
15 it's very troubling. And I -- I don't know how
16 Judge Bloom is going to survive these things.
17 I intend to present this argument to the Court
18 myself.

19 And I've been to Superior Court
20 where I've won. And I've been to Commonwealth
21 Court where I've won and that the most trouble
22 thing of all is, that our own government is
23 stifling us. And, you know, you just look
24 even at the reassessment, nothing legitimate
25 about it at all, not one thing.

1 And people's property taxes have
2 been raised. Look at the downtown in the city,
3 one vast parking lot. And then people brag
4 about tearing a building down. But my question
5 is, what have you built?

6 And how did the University and
7 all the schools get so out of control? And why
8 are we shielding all of the non-profits? And
9 how do residents hang onto their property under
10 this tax burden? And, you know, I hope that
11 the city's police, fire, DPW and clerical union
12 would stop being lap dogs for the politicians
13 because that's what it's become.

14 And the city's actually dead.
15 Believe anything you want. We're all talking
16 about grant money. This city is deceased.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Would
19 anyone else like to address Council?

20 MR. LITTLE: Hello, Council, Rik
21 Little. Well, a lot of things have been
22 happening on a lot of stages. Give me liberty
23 or give me death is what Patrick Henry said.
24 And I've been thinking about that a lot lately
25 because actually the basis for all religion is

1 to understand death.

2 And we had this statement about
3 ending civilization. And it's very disturbing.
4 But you can't throw the baby out with the bath
5 water because, I mean, take the homeless
6 problem. There's no reason for it. There were
7 grants that were made that were granted.

8 And if you read the regulations of
9 these grants in the CFR, Scranton Housing
10 Authority has a duty to make fair and
11 affordable housing to people. And they got
12 millions and millions of dollars over the
13 years, buildings set aside especially for the
14 elderly like Park Gardens and Adams Avenue High
15 Rise.

16 It's there. But in this county, in
17 order to make all the ancillary businesses
18 around this area seem to be having to do with
19 the judicial branch and with, you know,
20 partisan judges and the whole election thing.
21 And just thinking about mail-in voting is so
22 ridiculous, the whole voting thing, democracy,
23 no kings day.

24 It's going on and on. And it's
25 crazier and crazier every day. I think I

1 understand because when I was homeless, I got
2 so tired and so confused and this has happened
3 five times.

4 And I could distinctly remember all
5 five times where I forgot my -- who I was, what
6 my name was. Yet, I'm remembering a song, you
7 know, something that had to do with, you know,
8 things like that. And I think that's what
9 happened to President Trump.

10 I think he's lost his way in this
11 thing. But in talking about throwing the baby
12 out with the bath water, all of these health
13 things, the kratom things, the Medicare,
14 Medicaid and even the public access. So we
15 really need public access.

16 We need some sort of place where
17 people could go and get information,
18 specifically about the local stuff because --
19 because it's necessary. And, you know, I
20 think, I mean, in my mind Biden blew up that
21 pipeline from Russian to Germany.

22 That's where the oil goes. That's
23 why I think, you know, in the end of this,
24 Putin could be the savior of this whole thing.
25 If the tariffs went down on him, he could be

1 the provider for Europe and America be -- you
2 know, but they're doing other things, blocking
3 and all of this drama every day.

4 With the kratom, I mean, I would
5 think after Covid no one, no one would put any
6 salt into the government telling you what is
7 healthy. I knew what I needed to be healthy,
8 and I couldn't get it, you know. And I
9 couldn't get it. I had to go out of my way to
10 get the things to get my energy up back again
11 where I could remember where I was and what I
12 was doing.

13 But long ago they set up Scranton
14 Housing Authority. And they have 2,500 units.
15 That's probably like 5,000 beds. And then for
16 the county, there's no affordable housing.
17 It's a mess. And you got all of these 5013Cs
18 sending people around jobs and, you know, the
19 criminalization of kratom -- kratom, I mean,
20 that's ridiculous.

21 They've talked about it about all
22 the other things, no, you shouldn't -- you
23 shouldn't -- you should get rid of seed oil and
24 glucosamine at Wal-Mart before you do the
25 kratom thing because that makes people sick

1 and tired and unable to deal with reality.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Fifth
4 Order.

5 MR. VOLDENBERG: FIFTH ORDER. 5-A.
6 MOTIONS.

7 MR. SCHUSTER: Dr. Rothchild, do you
8 have any motions or comments?

9 DR. ROTHCHILD: I still have
10 concerns regarding the kratom ordinances 6-A
11 and 6-B that are on the agenda tonight. But
12 I'll discuss them further once we are on the
13 question and get to them. But that's all that
14 I have. Thank you.

15 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Mr. Sean
16 McAndrew, do you have any motions or comments?

17 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yeah, I have a
18 few. First, I want to go over responses for my
19 questions from last week that we received
20 today.

21 Councilman McAndrew also inquired
22 the reason for -- that the Mayor did not sign
23 the ordinance overturning the HARB decision in
24 regards to allowing Fidelity to tear down the
25 building, the response we got was per Section

1 504 of the City's Home Rule Charter, the Mayor
2 has authority, sign, not sign or veto all
3 legislation upon final passage by City Council.

4 In the event the Mayor vetoes
5 legislation, he or she is required to provide
6 City Council for her rationale for using such
7 veto. That's it. So the response to me was a
8 textbook dodging the question. I didn't ask
9 whether the Mayor had the authority or not.

10 I already know the Section 504 and
11 the Home Rule Charter and what it says. The
12 question simply was why didn't the Mayor sign
13 the ordinance? I believe any decision we make
14 as public officials if it's questioned should
15 be answered. That is true transparency.

16 So again, Mr. Gilbride, if you could
17 ask thank you for the lesson in the Home Rule
18 Charter, but if you could give a reason why it
19 wasn't signed. I don't think we're going to
20 get an answer, but hopefully we'll get it.
21 I'll keep asking. Maybe the next time when
22 they're in caucus I'll ask.

23 Next, I did ask regarding if there
24 is any policy or any times where DPW fills
25 potholes on state roads or fills in utility

1 cuts -- pave cuts for utility companies.

2 The response we got today was, there
3 is no official policy. As a general rule, DPW
4 does not fill potholes on state routes or
5 utility pave cuts unless we are trying to
6 alleviate a dangerous situation.

7 On Thursday, April 9th, the DPW
8 Director instructed road crews to fill several
9 potholes and small pave cuts along the Scranton
10 Half Marathon in effort to render the route for
11 safe -- a safe race for the participants.

12 The city normally received numerous
13 claims after the race that about the roads'
14 conditions. I completely agree with making
15 sure those roads are safe for the race, 100
16 percent.

17 My question is going to be -- and,
18 Frank, if you could send this down, was there
19 any attempt to coordinate with the utility
20 companies to say, hey, we have this race coming
21 up, could you check these pave cuts and clean
22 them up?

23 I think that's something our pave
24 cut inspector should be doing. But was there
25 any attempts made there? And I know

1 Mr. Cusick, you know, said he has great
2 communication with PennDOT. Was there any
3 coordination with PennDOT to say, hey, we got
4 this race coming up, the weather is good, the
5 hot patch is out, can you help us and get these
6 paved?

7 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll ask that
8 question.

9 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Okay. Next
10 question is, are we getting reimbursed for the
11 work that was done and the materials that were
12 used? When we use PennDOT -- borrow salt from
13 PennDot, we have to reimburse. I'm wondering
14 if that will be the same with this.

15 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll also ask that.

16 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Okay. Next
17 question, I know previous Councils, I know
18 Mr. King was a big proponent of this. And it
19 also got brought up when I first got on
20 Council, Penn Ambulance.

21 We do not have a dedicated ambulance
22 service. We have dedicated firemen and police,
23 but what we don't have is a dedicated EMS
24 service.

25 I know there was discussions

1 yesterday between Council President Schuster
2 and Attorney Gilbride with the city regarding
3 this issue. I know there might be some
4 concerns. So can we have the city put in
5 writing what the concerns are?

6 I understand there might be some
7 discussion of possibly having our own, but I
8 don't think we're anywhere close to doing that.
9 And I don't even know if we will be able to
10 afford that.

11 But I do believe we should have a
12 dedicated service because we have nobody to
13 hold accountable if -- if we need emergency
14 service for ambulance, okay?

15 MR. VOLDENBERG: Okay.

16 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Some resident
17 concerns, Weston Field, the skate park and the
18 park not being locked at night. I was over
19 there talking to some residents last night. I
20 guess all throughout the night there's a lot
21 people over there skating past -- past the time
22 they should be when the park is closed.

23 None of the gates lock. They put
24 this brand new -- some of the new gates in
25 there. I tried to lock it. I tried to even

1 see if it would close. It does not close. The
2 latch doesn't even fit the pole that's there.
3 It's a beautiful park.

4 We're doing great things to it. It
5 looks like we're just going to be putting an
6 updated soccer field, which is excellent. We
7 need to have those services for our kids, for
8 our families to have a good time and enjoy our
9 park.

10 But the neighborhoods can't suffer
11 because of it. We need to make sure that when
12 the park is closed, nobody is trespassing. And
13 I'm not sure if that's putting more cameras
14 there. We have that Real Time Crime Center.

15 Maybe they could watch and maybe put
16 a speaker there. And they could, you know,
17 say, hey, you know, please exit the park in 10
18 minutes or the cops will be coming by.

19 I know we can't really patrol it
20 right now with manpower, but there has to be
21 something we could do at these parks to make
22 sure nobody is in it past dark. And also,
23 again, like, you can't even lock it if you
24 need. So that's a concern.

25 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll look into it.

1 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: All right. And
2 then finally, my overall communication with the
3 city. This week -- last week I was trying to
4 set meetings with a few members of
5 administration.

6 First was the LIPS Department. I
7 sent an e-mail through Frank like we were told,
8 never got a response. So I showed up three
9 days later to speak directly with them to
10 schedule an appointment.

11 They didn't want to schedule with me
12 directly. They said they sent an e-mail to
13 Frank. So when I got home, I checked my
14 e-mail. The e-mail wasn't from the head of the
15 LIPS Department.

16 It was actually from the OECD
17 Director on his behalf to try to schedule a
18 meeting, found that very odd; but hopefully
19 we'll have a meeting scheduled -- we have a
20 meeting scheduled actually for tomorrow.

21 Next thing is, I sent an e-mail to
22 Matt Domines, have a quick call. I have a
23 question about the budget. That was all during
24 the same time. So in the meantime, I get an
25 answer from Eileen Cipriani saying if you want

1 to schedule an appointment or talk to any of
2 the administration, you have to go through
3 Grace.

4 I don't know who Grace is. But she
5 was on the e-mail and so was Matt. So I had to
6 ask Grace to ask Matt if I could have a quick
7 five minute call. Finally I got an answer.
8 You could call Eileen and Matt. They're both
9 together.

10 It's concerning to me -- us on
11 Council if we have a quick question or we want
12 to stop in and ask a question or we want to
13 schedule a meeting to work together and get
14 answers, we don't -- we have to jump through
15 hoops. We're paying people significant money
16 to run their departments.

17 If we can't speak to them without
18 Eileen Cipriani there, I think that's a
19 problem. And I question do we have capable
20 people that could handle -- handle this
21 department because one of the concerns she said
22 is the reason we have to do this this way is
23 because when -- what is the -- what was the
24 thing for the garbage -- Rubicon, sorry.

25 When Rubicon was being questioned, a

1 lot of misinformation was going back. That was
2 not misinformation. That's not -- that was
3 just a bad decision that they still, you know,
4 that they still got burned for.

5 So I want to work with the city.
6 And I want things to go better going forward.
7 I don't know why we have to jump through hoops
8 just to have a five minute phone call or send
9 an e-mail to answer a question. I asked Frank
10 to send an e-mail regarding the answer for the
11 DPW potholes last Thursday.

12 I -- he didn't get a response
13 Thursday. He didn't get a response Friday. He
14 didn't get a response yesterday. We -- we
15 asked and asked and asked. I even then hopped
16 on the e-mail directly to Mr. Cusick with Frank
17 on it to ask for the answer. They refuse to
18 answer us.

19 That is not transparency. That is
20 not the Mayor working with the Council.
21 Everybody wants to talk about maybe this is an
22 anti-Mayor Council. But I think it's a Mayor
23 who is anti-Council. And I think we need to
24 work together going forward.

25 And we should be getting our

1 questions asked and answered and be a team. I
2 don't understand why it has to be so hard. So
3 hopefully after them hearing this and I know
4 they're watching, going forward we could change
5 things and make it a little bit easier. Thank
6 you.

7 MR. SCHUSTER: Also, just to add
8 onto that, we're the forward facing piece of
9 government that speaks with the citizens on a
10 weekly basis. We bring information back to
11 administration.

12 If they want us to run our
13 communication with their residents, they need
14 to provide us with answers in a timely manner
15 because we're who are facing the citizens on
16 the front line.

17 So if we get those answers, we're
18 actually helping them in turn by providing
19 those answers to our citizens. Up next is Mr.
20 Mark McAndrew. Do you have any motions or
21 comments?

22 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yeah, I got a
23 couple. So, yeah, I could chime in too. So,
24 you know, it's funny that we don't have the
25 ability to reach out to a department head.

1 When we do and -- it's all these speed bumps or
2 barriers.

3 Where I know -- I'm here long enough
4 to know that there were -- this wasn't always
5 the case, maybe with some new ones. But
6 previous Council members were on speed dial
7 with certain department heads. And we're
8 frequent fliers in the building even when it's
9 closed, almost daily.

10 So for administration to now say
11 there's some type of protocol, nonsense,
12 nonsense. All right. Enough of that. I mean,
13 you know, this is nonsense. All right. So I'm
14 going to reply with regards to inquiries I
15 posed over the past couple weeks.

16 So when the new loading zone parking
17 spot was put at 417 Lackawanna Avenue, a
18 resident, you know, for safety sake said, hey,
19 it's great. It's a little dangerous for
20 some -- his employees or colleagues, could they
21 please put some lines or better signage or
22 both.

23 And the response I got was, DPW is
24 on standby and will paint these lines when they
25 receive the specifications from the City

1 Engineer. So if that gentleman is watching
2 tonight, there's your answer, okay?

3 Also, so last week, I mean, it's
4 been printed -- it was in the paper a couple of
5 times with the paving list. And that's great.
6 And there's a paving list in the spring. And
7 there's a paving list in the fall.

8 But my question was, all the -- some
9 streets aren't on it that are being worked on,
10 especially the ones in Green Ridge, especially
11 the ones on Jackson Street. So my question was
12 because we didn't get any clarity from the pave
13 cut inspector or from administration or from
14 the utility companies as to when they're going
15 to do their paving.

16 And most of the time if they work on
17 a large project it's curb to curb or should be.
18 All right. So like I said, there might be some
19 folks out there who saw the paving list going,
20 oh, my God, I guess my street's not getting it
21 again.

22 So I'm happy to report -- I'm not
23 going to read the whole curb to curb full width
24 restoration requirements, you know, the permits
25 begin -- to be flagged and, you know,

1 requirements. What I want to do is just read
2 out the streets that utility companies are
3 working on primarily water with all the
4 upgrades and where there's going to be final
5 paving on these streets.

6 And most of them weren't on the
7 paving list. So I'm glad to see this: Linda
8 Lane, South Lincoln Avenue, Jackson Street
9 because that's a war zone, South Sumner. I
10 think Les brought up Sumner.

11 So there's your answer -- South
12 Bromley, North Bromley, North Lincoln, North
13 Sumner, Euclid. All right. So that was asked
14 also. After utilities, you know, finish --
15 complete their work, North Garfield, Battle
16 Street, Johler, Fig, Cherry, Brooks, Prospect.

17 That's a disaster too I keep
18 hearing -- East Locust, Maple, South Webster,
19 Qunincy -- I don't know what this street --
20 what is it -- I just have North W-E, Webster --
21 okay, North Webster, Taylor Ave, Ridge Ave --
22 is that John Ave -- Delaware Ave, Capouse,
23 Ryerson, Wyoming, Penn, Electric, Throop,
24 Hollister, Sanders Street, Saginwa Street.

25 So there is 53 permits requiring

1 curb to curb because that's what I asked, full
2 width paving has been identified. This doesn't
3 include other permits that have been already
4 received full width paving.

5 16 permits have already been flagged
6 for curb to curb with new preliminary check.
7 When we have the close -- we have to close 2026
8 permits. We can produce an immediate list with
9 every single permit flagged for curb to curb.

10 So this is great. We're getting a
11 little -- we're getting some information
12 because, like I said, some people see the pave
13 list and go, huh, but they're driving these
14 streets that I just mentioned thinking
15 nothing's going to be done.

16 So this is good news. So we just
17 got to keep our eye on them. We got to keep
18 the utility company's feet to the fire, make
19 sure they do curb to curb. That hasn't always
20 happened when they promised it. I'm here long
21 enough to see that.

22 But this is good news. So we got
23 to hang onto this one and keep our eye on this,
24 Mr. Voldenberg, and maybe they could put this
25 on the website if -- it would be beneficial,

1 all right, for the people that aren't listening
2 tonight or -- it would be a good resource for
3 them. All right.

4 I'm sorry, but you can't speak at
5 this time. All right. So what else did I
6 inquire about? So I received them. So I have
7 a couple of new ones. Also, along with -- we
8 got this handout given us -- given to us today
9 about the pave cuts. And that's an update --
10 permits audit update.

11 So, you know, they said, hey, thanks
12 for caucus. They're going to take our advice
13 on tracking the sealing which is really the
14 final restoration if it's just a pave cut. The
15 sealing is the tar perimeter. All right.

16 I know it's done by another company
17 besides the people that actually put the hot
18 patch in or whatever. So since our caucus,
19 permits now require an inspection and photo
20 proof that the cut was sealed in order to close
21 out.

22 All right. The city identified 105
23 permits requiring final seal inspection, 53
24 permits require curb to occur. We know that.
25 Pennoni is actively performing final seal

1 inspections for the old permits.

2 Thirty-two of these permits were
3 inspected in the past week, 30 already have
4 sealing completed. So it's getting done. And
5 I know we had to wait for better weather and
6 that's fine.

7 But at least they're getting done
8 because I still drive up and down Main Avenue
9 and there's cuts there that are a couple years
10 old that aren't sealed. A few reports have
11 been attached with photos to show -- okay, so
12 we got a couple photos.

13 But they have under fines there's a
14 little heading here between 20 and 30 fines
15 have been issued since January, 2025, cross
16 violation -- cross violation letters, quality
17 of life and late fees. I don't know why
18 quality of life is included here.

19 When we had them in caucus there was
20 five. So I don't know if they're trying to
21 bundle some fines and look like they're issuing
22 more. Can we get clarification on that? I
23 don't know what -- and some late fees. One
24 fine originated from -- originated from five
25 day violation process.

1 Mr. Voldenberg, can you get a
2 clarification on these fines?

3 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will.

4 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Are these actual
5 utility fine -- company fines? They sent it
6 with the pave cut. So I don't know if that's
7 true. It might be a little misleading or
8 confusing. All right. Next, so a couple weeks
9 ago I brought -- maybe a couple months ago, the
10 Third Avenue detour for the Elm Street bridge
11 project, right, the poor neighbors there
12 receive constantly the traffic is detoured
13 through there.

14 And the amount of dirt, dust, and
15 debris is ridiculous. And I remember asking
16 for this to be done. There was some type of an
17 agreement. Administration said it doesn't
18 remember it where it was supposed to be done
19 and maintained because the amount of traffic
20 that travels on that road.

21 So I'm happy to report something
22 that they did -- the street was clean, but just
23 like a quick -- it was quickly sprayed a little
24 bit down the middle and nothing really else.
25 So I know the weather's a lot warmer because

1 this resident sent me a picture and a video
2 where there's a poor lady in her late 70s out
3 shovelling the dirt and, you know, because it's
4 nice out and her gutter.

5 And also a video where the amount of
6 trucks is -- because that's where a lot of the
7 trucks are detoured carrying all kinds of
8 sediment and debris that is falling. So these
9 people can't even open their window yet on a
10 nice 80 day like today because that video
11 showed me there's just dust constantly in the
12 air.

13 All right? So maybe they need to do
14 this more than once or a few more drive-bys and
15 make sure this property -- or not property,
16 this road is taken care of. Can you please
17 request them to do that?

18 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will.

19 MR. MCANDREW: All right. And this
20 was from another resident. It's not a bad
21 idea. You know, like I said, some of the best
22 ideas we get are from our residents. And I
23 truly mean that. And for the most part, most
24 ideas are good ideas, you know?

25 And this isn't taking a shot at

1 anybody in City Hall, but this resident's like,
2 hey, you know, Mark, you know, now that gas is
3 approaching \$5 a gallon, I mean, I don't know
4 what we budget for gas. I don't have it in
5 front of me.

6 But it's really gone up and every
7 one of us here feel it. I filled my car the
8 other day and I'm, like, whoa. It was a half
9 of a tank within a couple days which is absurd.
10 So he said just an idea to throw around. You
11 know, I said, hey, I'll bring it -- I'll throw
12 it against the wall or bring it to
13 administration.

14 He's like, well, you know, all the
15 people that take vehicles home, do they really
16 need to do it? I'm not saying the very
17 important ones or -- but, you know, a lot of
18 these vehicles are taken home.

19 And instead of that because, you
20 know, we're flipping the bill for the gas,
21 maybe until it comes down, why can't the people
22 leave the vehicle at work, drive to work like
23 everybody else does, take the vehicle and, you
24 know, do their daily duties that require that
25 vehicle and instead of, you know, instead of

1 driving -- taking it home and utilizing it.

2 And, you know, there's always --
3 there's always question as how much use do
4 they use when they're off of work. So it's not
5 a bad idea. Throw it out there to
6 administration. Say it's an idea. Think about
7 it. Try to save some money, you know?

8 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will, sir.

9 MR. MARK MCANDREW: See if they'll
10 embrace that. And that is all I have. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you, very much.
13 Mr. Flynn, do you have any motions or comments?

14 MR. FLYNN: Just a few quickly, one,
15 Mr. Voldenberg, can we look into the
16 possibility to put stop signs up the corner of
17 Capouse Avenue and Grandview Street? There are
18 currently one each way on Capouse Avenue but
19 none on either way on Grandview Street.

20 It's the only street in that
21 direction over there that doesn't have them,
22 been getting neighbor complaints about high
23 speed of traffic, some cats being hit by cars,
24 etc. So if we could look into the possibility
25 of that, I would appreciate it.

1 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will, Mr. Flynn.

2 MR. FLYNN: The only other thing
3 because I think it's timely here tonight with
4 all the talk about the unsheltered, the
5 homeless, is that I received outreach today
6 from an individual who works at my Center for
7 Independent Living.

8 And they're -- they're a big entity
9 within the City of Scranton. And they are
10 looking to start a mobile food truck for
11 the -- for the unsheltered in Scranton. They
12 have their own transitional skills center for
13 individuals age 14 to 22.

14 They cook their own food. They
15 prepare all the food within that facility,
16 which is a -- from what I'm told a state of the
17 art facility. They would use their 10 or 12
18 passenger vans to go into the community, meet
19 individuals where they are and provide these
20 meals.

21 No meals would -- no one would be
22 charged anything. They're not being sold to
23 the public, anything like that. To start, they
24 want to do this two days a week. I believe
25 breakfast, lunch, and dinner which is now even

1 more timely hearing tonight that CIC is saying
2 they'll only be providing lunch.

3 But the issue is that the individual
4 has reached out to both the LIPS Department as
5 well as the health department within the City
6 of Scranton for the past three weeks on if they
7 need a food truck license or any other
8 permitting to be able to provide this service
9 within the city.

10 They have not received a response at
11 all yet from anyone that they -- they reached
12 out to. All they want is to know would this
13 activity require a mobile food truck license or
14 any other specific permits under City of
15 Scranton regulations.

16 They -- because before they start
17 doing this, they want to have all of their
18 ducks in a row, their licenses in place,
19 whatever permits they need. But no one from
20 licensing and inspections or the health
21 department has responded to their multiple
22 e-mails over the past three weeks.

23 So if we could sort of nudge those
24 departments to answer these questions so they
25 could get up and running on this impactful

1 endeavor within our city, I'd really appreciate
2 that. So if we could -- if we could do that
3 this week, I would greatly appreciate that.

4 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll look into it,
5 sir.

6 MR. FLYNN: All right. Thank you.
7 That's all I have.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
9 I have a few tonight as well. We do have an
10 update on South Irving Avenue. For the last
11 couple of weeks, some residents of South Irving
12 Avenue have been coming in.

13 There was some no parking signs that
14 were put up. And there was some confusion
15 regarding that. It seems like there's a lot of
16 infighting with neighbors there. We did reach
17 out to the fire department as well as our city
18 engineers.

19 And our Chief John Judge was out at
20 the scene as well as our City Engineer. And
21 Mr. Judge said that there was no issues
22 regarding the fire department's accessing the
23 homes on the block. And there is no issues
24 with the current parking restrictions that
25 safety vehicles can turn with the current no

1 parking sign in the center.

2 So also, Mr. Tom Reilly from our
3 city engineers was out there. He said the
4 signs were modified this week. There was some
5 confusion with the sign in the center as the no
6 parking sign in the center had arrows on it
7 that pointed to the left and the right making
8 it seem like there was no parking in any of the
9 spaces at the end of the street.

10 That's not the case. That sign has
11 been removed and a single no parking sign has
12 been put up in the center of the end of South
13 Irving Avenue. So there is only one no parking
14 spot. Cars can park on the left and onto the
15 right.

16 And with that being said, there is
17 no ordinance that needs to come to Council to
18 change any of the street patterns on South
19 Irving Avenue. So at this point in time,
20 there's a single no parking sign in the middle
21 so that cars can turn around and emergency
22 vehicles and delivery trucks could turn around.

23 I did get an answer on one of the
24 questions I had last week. We talked about a
25 new garbage truck that the city is going to be

1 getting. And I asked the size of that garbage
2 truck. It is a 25 yard truck. So I'm happy to
3 hear it is the larger size as I know at one
4 point in time the city was buying smaller
5 garbage trucks.

6 And there was some issues around
7 those garbage trucks. I want to reiterate Sean
8 McAndrew had mentioned Weston Field. So
9 there's a lot of upgrades that have happened at
10 Weston Field. We have a new pool at Weston
11 Field. We have a million dollar skate park at
12 Weston Field.

13 And tonight we're going to be moving
14 forward or introducing Item 5-B which is
15 working with FEFA to bring a small soccer mini
16 pitch program to Weston Field. So with all of
17 the money that's being spent at Weston Field,
18 the thing that keeps coming up time and time
19 again is that there's access to this park at
20 all hours of the night.

21 So some of the -- I've received
22 complaints from some of the neighbors as well,
23 some of the same that Mr. McAndrew has spoken
24 to. Can we get -- my question is, what is the
25 city's plan for ensuring that the upgrades and

1 money that the city is spending on this
2 renovation of this park is being secured with
3 either fences, locks, gates?

4 What is the city's plan moving -- as
5 we move into the summer months and the warmer
6 weather with more usage of this park?

7 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll ask those
8 questions.

9 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. There's
10 clearly visible signs that say no trespassing
11 after dusk. As dusk can change as the sun
12 stays out longer, it does provide for more time
13 in the park. But after it gets dark, there
14 should be no individuals in the park.

15 There's also clear signs that say no
16 parking in the park. And cars are continuing
17 to go into the park at night. And I'm getting
18 reports of people being in there. And I see
19 heads shaking in the audience, people being in
20 there up to 2 a.m. in the morning, some of the
21 cars having their headlights shining on the
22 fields in the courts that are there so
23 individuals could play there at night.

24 And it's very close to the
25 neighbors' homes. So they could hear

1 skateboards and they could hear basketballs.
2 And it's keeping some of the elderly residents
3 in that area up at night. Another comment that
4 I got or another complaint that I got was, in
5 the last few nights around 11:00 at night at
6 Sweeny Beach, there's loud music being played.

7 And it's reverberating down the
8 riverbed or the river valley that individuals
9 in the Weston Field area could hear that loud
10 music. I've seen videos of it from the Weston
11 Field area, which is quite a distance away.

12 And this music is -- it's louder
13 than some of the activity that's happening at
14 the park which is 50 yards away. So this music
15 is blasting down the riverbed. So if we could
16 see what does the enforcement look like in
17 Sweeny Beach and what is the city doing in
18 regards to that enforcement?

19 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will, sir.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: I did get a concern
21 about Center Street. So they just recently,
22 they painted lines. They are orange or yellow
23 lines which seem to be communication lines. I
24 know there's internet upgrades that are
25 occurring downtown.

1 I know there's streetscapes that are
2 occurring downtown. There's curbs and
3 different upgrades being done downtown. And
4 some of the new businesses that just moved in
5 there have sidewalks which are in relatively
6 good condition have just been marked up.

7 If there's improvements going on
8 there, if there's communication work to be
9 done, are those sidewalks going to be restored
10 and do they have plans to do any upgrades or on
11 the area of Center Street?

12 MR. VOLDENBERG: I'll ask those
13 questions.

14 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
15 I did also get a request about a stop sign. So
16 on the corner of McDonough Ave., and Colliery
17 Street, if we could send that to the police
18 department about the --

19 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. I'm sure
21 I'm going remember that I forgot something
22 here. But that's all for tonight.

23 MR. VOLDENBERG: 5-B. FOR
24 INTRODUCTION - A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE
25 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO

1 EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH
2 THE UNITED STATES SOCCER FOUNDATION, INC.
3 ("FOUNDATION") FOR A MINI PITCH PROGRAM GRANT
4 OF ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$100,000).

5 MR. SCHUSTER: At this time I'll
6 entertain a motion that Item 5-B be introduced
7 into its proper committee.

8 MR. FLYNN: So moved.

9 DR. ROTHCHILD: Second.

10 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?

11 DR. ROTHCHILD: On the question, I
12 think this is a city great initiative. I'm
13 glad that we're receiving this grant and happy
14 to approve it. I did take a look into, like,
15 the mini pitch stadiums and the different
16 components that they have.

17 And I think it's pretty neat. And
18 they'll be another great asset to add to the
19 city and to the Weston Field.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
21 I'd also like to echo that sentiment. I think
22 it's a great project. As you see, it's
23 \$100,000 for this project. I just want to
24 reiterate what I had said about Weston Field
25 with all the money that's being put into this

1 field, how are we going to secure the
2 improvements that we're making in this park.
3 Anyone else on the question?

4 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: I agree with
5 that last part. I mean, I was just told ATVs
6 were on the field ripping it up. And people
7 who actually use the field on the weekends kind
8 of rolled it and did it for the city. So it's
9 great that we had a community member step up.

10 But again, we have to have it locked
11 so something this new and beautiful doesn't get
12 torn up.

13 MR. SCHUSTER: Yeah, I have to throw
14 this in there as well. The neighbors in the
15 area do not mind and they actually -- they're
16 very happy with the upgrades that have happened
17 in the park. So if they could just keep those
18 activities to the daylight hours, they'd be
19 much happier.

20 And I will say the same thing. I've
21 seen it last year I was down there many times
22 at night and there's tire tracks over the
23 fields and vehicles are entering these areas
24 so --

25 MR. MARK MCANDREW: On the question,

1 yeah, I'm thrilled we're getting this and it's
2 going to make the park better. But over the
3 past couple summers, these are issues that
4 always come back around this time where, you
5 know, we're not securing whether it's
6 Novembrino Splash Pad area.

7 And that's never locked. I don't
8 know how many people would call me and say,
9 Mark, Jesus, it's not locked. What's the deal?
10 And I remember we reached out to administration
11 and said what's your plan? What's the schedule
12 to lock these parks?

13 Well, we do. We take care of it.
14 Well -- and we've spent a lot of money. We
15 approved every one of these projects. And a
16 lot of this is one time events because a lot of
17 it was Covid money. But, you know, in order to
18 maintain -- because we can't replace these
19 every couple years. We just don't have the
20 money.

21 So we got to take care of them. And
22 the first step is securing them at night. So
23 let's ask administration again, you know,
24 update us or what's -- because of all the new
25 improvements, what's the strategy, what's the

1 schedule to secure these parks, not only lock
2 them like some of my colleagues said, maybe
3 improve lighting, maybe reach out to the police
4 department, put it on one of their maybe patrol
5 list or -- but we need to work together.

6 We all -- we're all thrilled that we
7 have these new things, but we have to take care
8 of them.

9 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

10 MR. FLYNN: On the question, I just
11 want to point out that I believe that this --
12 this mini pitch that we're getting is part of
13 us being one of the host cities for the watch
14 parties for the World Cup that's going to be
15 happening this summer in 2026.

16 It's a really cool thing, us in
17 conjunction with Lackawanna County being a host
18 city for some of these watch parties of only
19 three cities in the Commonwealth of
20 Pennsylvania were chosen to be them.

21 And as part of that, they are giving
22 us this mini pitch. So it's really cool. And
23 I agree with my colleagues that we have to make
24 sure that something that we're getting like
25 this, this cool new equipment that not many

1 other places are getting, that we take good
2 care of it and we are good stewards of having
3 this equipment. So that's all I have. Thanks.

4 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much,
5 Mr. Flynn. Anyone else on the question?

6 DR. ROTHCHILD: I'm just in
7 agreement with the importance of securing our
8 parks and making sure that they're locked and
9 that there is additional security, if needed,
10 to maintain our assets.

11 MR. SCHUSTER: All those in favor of
12 introduction signify by saying aye.

13 DR. ROTHCHILD: Aye.

14 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Aye.

15 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Aye.

16 MR. FLYNN: Aye.

17 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye. Opposed? The
18 ayes it and so moved.

19 MR. VOLDENBERG: SIXTH ORDER.

20 6-A. READING BY TITLE - FILE OF THE
21 COUNCIL NO. 12, 2026 - AN ORDINANCE -
22 REGULATING THE SALE AND/OR DISTRIBUTION OF
23 KRATOM (MITRAGYNA SPECIOSA) AND ITS ACTIVE
24 RELATED ALKALOID, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO
25 MITRAGYNINE AND 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE (7-OH),

1 AND/OR ANY SYNTHETIC, SEMI-SYNTHETIC,
2 CONCENTRATED, OR CHEMICALLY MODIFIED
3 DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR
4 INGESTION TO MINORS; PROHIBITING THE POSSESSION
5 OF KRATOM (MITRAGYNA SPECIOSA) AND ITS ACTIVE
6 RELATED ALKALOID, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO
7 MITRAGYNINE AND 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE (7-OH),
8 AND/OR ANY SYNTHETIC, SEMI-SYNTHETIC,
9 CONCENTRATED, OR CHEMICALLY MODIFIED
10 DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR
11 INGESTION BY MINORS; AND, PROVIDING FOR
12 ENFORCEMENT OF THESE PROVISIONS, INCLUDING
13 PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS.

14 MR. SCHUSTER: You've heard reading
15 by title of Item 6-A. What is your pleasure?

16 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Mr. Chairman, I
17 move that Item 6-A pass reading by title.

18 MR. FLYNN: Second.

19 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?

20 DR. ROTHCHILD: On the question, my
21 feelings haven't changed on these pieces of
22 legislation since last week. I still believe
23 that it would be irresponsible of us to pass
24 these ordinances as they are.

25 I appreciate the effort in

1 developing legislation to address kratom being
2 sold in Scranton. But I do believe that the
3 ordinances need more -- more consideration and
4 more work on them than perhaps anticipated.

5 And we did receive a list of
6 questions today from the administration to
7 Council and to those who drafted the
8 legislation. And I do feel the questions that
9 they included were valid and warranted.

10 And I will once again tonight make a
11 motion to table 6-A and 6-B. I'll separate
12 those motions. But I believe that this
13 shouldn't be rushed. And it is important to me
14 that we have a well thought out plan on
15 enforcing and implementing these ordinances.

16 So with that, I'll make a motion to
17 table Item 6-A which is -- which we're
18 currently addressing.

19 MR. SCHUSTER: There's a motion to
20 table 6-A. Do I have a second? I do not have
21 a second. Anyone else on the question?

22 MR. FLYNN: Yeah, on the question,
23 I'll just speak to both of them now. I think
24 at its core right now this comes down to a
25 simple question. And that question is what is

1 the role of local government when faced with an
2 unregulated evolving substance with real life
3 public health concerns?

4 Many have suggested that instead of
5 a ban we should regulate. In theory, that
6 sounds reasonable. In practice for the City of
7 Scranton, it is not. We are a city government,
8 not a federal agency, not a state regulatory
9 body.

10 We do not have the infrastructure
11 to monitor supply chains or to enforce
12 manufacturing standards across an
13 international market. So when people say just
14 regulate, my question is how?

15 What mechanism do we have at our
16 disposal to ensure that what is being sold in
17 our city is safe? The answer is none. There
18 is no regulation on any of kratom, 7-OH,
19 anything that is coming into our country and to
20 our area to understand and know what exactly it
21 is you're getting.

22 There is national trade groups that
23 try to put into place best practices on
24 manufacturing. The issue is, it's not a third
25 party that is deciding this. It's that same

1 trade group that is coming in and telling you
2 yeah, you're good. You're -- you're now part
3 of our good manufacturing program generally.
4 You're now part of it.

5 And, you know, I actually -- in
6 doing some more research, have seen that there
7 are some companies that are part of this trade
8 group and advocacy group at a national level
9 that have been flagged by the FDA for selling
10 more concentrated forms of kratom and more
11 concentrated 7-OH.

12 But since some of these companies
13 are part of that national trade group, instead
14 of allowing the FDA to go through with doing
15 what they have to do on some of these more
16 concentrated forms, the national trade group
17 comes back and takes shots at the FDA and say
18 you've got this one wrong, just because they
19 are part of their trade group.

20 It's not actually making sure that
21 the consumer is safe. It's making sure that
22 the entities that are part of their group are
23 the ones that are safe. And, you know, after
24 years and years of inaction at the state and
25 federal level waiting for a comprehensive

1 framework that may never come is not
2 responsible governance.

3 And, you know, I understand that the
4 administration has many questions. We received
5 them today. And it's my understanding that we
6 will have a meeting on them at -- later this
7 week. Hopefully that meeting will happen. I
8 just have to say, you know, I went back and I
9 watched last week.

10 And one of my fellow members said
11 that this was just a statement. It was not
12 enforceable but rather just a political
13 statement piece. And I find it baffling to say
14 that simply because a piece of legislation was
15 formulated and introduced by the legislative
16 body of this city and not in coordination with
17 the administration which is well within our
18 powers to do, that, what, the administration
19 will turn around and say we're not going to
20 enforce that because you started it?

21 I believe that every individual that
22 came here last week and is here again tonight,
23 everyone agrees there should a ban on any pure
24 leaf, natural leaf, 7-OH, synthesized products,
25 all of it for minors. Everyone unanimously

1 agrees on that.

2 But what did my colleague do? She
3 voted no on even introducing -- on even
4 introducing a ban on the sale to minors. And
5 I'm the one that's being accused of making a
6 statement piece? Come on. Let's get real
7 here. That's all I have. Thanks.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Just so
9 you know, the question -- we did get a list of
10 questions. Myself and Mr. Gilbride met with
11 the administration yesterday. We went over
12 several of those questions.

13 And we are going to get a meeting
14 coming up. I do believe in general this is a
15 proactive measure by Council to prevent some of
16 the nightmares we saw with the bath salts and
17 opioid epidemic. And in my work with
18 school-age children, I'm seeing it start to
19 permeate into the schools.

20 Many parties have come together.
21 And we're going to come together again to poke
22 holes in this, to take a look at some of the
23 blind spots and try to get this thing right as
24 we move toward. All those in favor of
25 introduction -- sorry. All those in favor

1 signify by saying aye.

2 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Aye.

3 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Aye.

4 MR. FLYNN: Aye.

5 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye. Opposed?

6 DR. ROTHCHILD: No.

7 MR. SCHUSTER: The ayes have it and
8 so moved.

9 MR. VOLDENBERG: 6-B. READING BY
10 TITLE - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 13, 2026 - AN
11 ORDINANCE - REGULATING THE SALE AND/OR
12 DISTRIBUTION OF KRATOM (MITRAGYNA SPECIOSA) AND
13 ITS ACTIVE RELATED ALKALOID, INCLUDING BUT NOT
14 LIMITED TO MITRAGYNINE AND 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE
15 (7-OH), AND/OR ANY SYNTHETIC, SEMI-SYNTHETIC,
16 CONCENTRATED, OR CHEMICALLY MODIFIED
17 DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR
18 INGESTION; PROHIBITING THE POSSESSION OF KRATOM
19 (MITRAGYNA SPECIOSA) AND ITS ACTIVE RELATED
20 ALKALOID, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO
21 MITRAGYNINE AND 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE (7-OH),
22 AND/OR ANY SYNTHETIC, SEMI-SYNTHETIC,
23 CONCENTRATED, OR CHEMICALLY MODIFIED
24 DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR
25 INGESTION; AND, PROHIBITING THE MANUFACTURE AND

1 PRODUCTION OF KRATOM (MITRAGYNA SPECIOSA) AND
2 ITS ACTIVE RELATED ALKALOID, INCLUDING BUT NOT
3 LIMITED TO MITRAGYNINE AND 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE
4 (7-OH), AND/OR ANY SYNTHETIC, SEMI-SYNTHETIC,
5 CONCENTRATED, OR CHEMICALLY MODIFIED
6 DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR
7 INGESTION.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. You've
9 heard reading by title of Item 6-B. What is
10 your pleasure?

11 MR. FLYNN: Mr. Chairman, I move
12 that Item 6-B pass reading by title.

13 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Second.

14 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?

15 DR. ROTHCHILD: On the question, I
16 have just a few things to add just in response.
17 So there were some discussions about the
18 practicality of it. And that I think it was
19 said that regulating it wouldn't be practical
20 for us.

21 But I also don't think a total ban
22 is practical either at least, once again, my
23 issue being with the way that the pieces are
24 written and some of the things that are
25 excluded from the legislation.

1 I believe that there could be more
2 to include that makes it -- that clarifies the
3 legislation and also the enforcement of it. So
4 the -- I don't think the administration ever
5 said or the Mayor has ever said that they plan
6 not to enforcement it because it's coming from
7 Council or because they weren't included in it.

8 I think their questions are pointed
9 to how they could move forward with enforcing
10 it. They want to make -- they want to make
11 sure that it's enforceable is the sense that --
12 that I have gotten. And that's -- that's where
13 I'm coming from as well.

14 So I want to make sure that whatever
15 we pass here that -- that's it able to be
16 enacted and that we have that figured out in
17 advance of it. So that is why I had a motion
18 to table the last piece. And I would still
19 like to make a motion to table 6-B tonight
20 because although a meeting is set for, I guess,
21 Thursday, I don't know who between but --
22 because there's a meeting set, I don't know
23 that's enough time before final vote and
24 passage next Tuesday to be able to fix what
25 we -- what we need to here or, you know, work

1 whatever needs to be worked out with
2 administration.

3 So that's where I'm coming from.
4 And once again going to move to table Item 6-B.

5 MR. SCHUSTER: We have a motion to
6 table Item 6-B. Do we have a second? Hearing
7 no second, anyone else on the question?

8 MR. FLYNN: On the question, I look
9 forward to meeting with administration, meeting
10 with applicable parties and individuals on this
11 later this week. You know, if it comes up that
12 there is some real issues with the -- with
13 anything within this ordinance and that we need
14 more time to look at it, I am absolutely open
15 to that.

16 But once again, I look forward to
17 meeting with the administration on this later
18 this week.

19 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. At this
20 point in time, myself and Mr. Gilbride have
21 reached out several times to the Mayor and the
22 administration about getting a meeting last
23 week moving into this week.

24 So we've lost a week at this point
25 in time. Hopefully we do get a meeting by the

1 end of this week, if not, prior to Tuesday.
2 And I just hope that we move quickly in getting
3 this meeting.

4 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: On the question,
5 unfortunately like everybody stated, we cannot
6 regulate it. There is no way for us to do
7 that. So the only way to control it is to ban
8 it right now. I think it's going to be a
9 decision you'll see after we make this -- other
10 municipalities start doing the same and
11 hopefully the state will step in and start
12 saying something about it.

13 You know, my understanding was in
14 the meeting yesterday, the Mayor also made a
15 comment about it being political, which is
16 shocking to me. And I'm interested to see what
17 the spin of the Scranton Times is going to do.

18 I mean, them trying to say that our
19 press conference was possibly violating
20 Sunshine was crazy to me, you know what I mean.
21 It's sad that we're trying to put proactive
22 legislation out there.

23 And these are the type of things
24 we're getting back from the media or from the
25 administration, so very disheartening. Maybe

1 the media should be more -- or the Times should
2 be more focused on the Mayor having press
3 conferences during City Hall hours outside the
4 city for her Congress race and not press
5 conferences that we are doing to make it a
6 better city and protect our minors and help
7 people in general. So thank you.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. All those
9 in favor signify by saying aye.

10 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Aye.

11 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Aye.

12 MR. FLYNN: Aye.

13 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye. Opposed?

14 DR. ROTHCHILD: No.

15 MR. SCHUSTER: The ayes have it and
16 so moved.

17 MR. VOLDENBERG: SEVENTH ORDER.

18 7-A. FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE
19 COMMITTEE ON RULES - FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION
20 NO. 40, 2026 - AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND OTHER
21 APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO EXECUTE AND ENTER
22 INTO A CONTRACT WITH SOEL INSTITUTE, INC. TO
23 PERFORM WATER SAFETY AND SWIM INSTRUCTION
24 PARTNERSHIP.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: As Chairperson for

1 the Committee on Rules, I recommend final
2 passage of Item 7-A.

3 MR. FLYNN: Second.

4 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?
5 Roll call, please.

6 MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

7 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Sean McAndrew.

9 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Mark McAndrew.

11 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yes.

12 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Flynn.

13 MR. FLYNN: Yes.

14 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

15 MR. SCHUSTER: Yes. I hereby
16 declare Item 7-A legally and lawfully adopted.

17 MR. VOLDENBERG: EIGHTH ORDER.

18 8-A. FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 7,
19 2026.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: This ordinance amends
21 provisions to the zoning ordinance for the City
22 of Scranton related to data centers.

23 MR. VOLDENBERG: 8-B. FILE OF THE
24 COUNCIL NO. 8, 2026.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: And this ordinance

1 amends provisions to the zoning ordinance for
2 the City of Scranton related to data centers.
3 These ordinances have been tabled until a
4 public hearing can be held at a later date.

5 If there's no other business, I'll
6 entertain a motion to adjourn.

7 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Motion to
8 adjourn.

9 MR. SCHUSTER: This meeting is
10 adjourned. Good night.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes taken by me of the above-cause and that this copy is a correct transcript of the same to the best of my ability.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria McCool".

Maria McCool, RPR
Official Court Reporter

(The foregoing certificate of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)

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