

COUNCIL FOR THE CITY OF SCRANTON

HELD:

Tuesday, April 7th, 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 Dorothy Evans, Michael Goffer, Mary Judith Colleran, Eugene Conforti, Alyce D'Antona and Bridget Flannery. 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. Third Order.

MR. VOLDENBERG: THIRD ORDER.

3-A. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED APRIL 1, 2026, FROM BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION/ARPA DIRECTOR FOR THE INSTITUTE'S CITY OF SCRANTON

1 ARPA 2023-2025 EVALUATION REPORT.

2 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
3 Are there any comments on any of the Third
4 Order items? If not, received and filed. Do
5 any Councilmen -- Councilmen or woman have any
6 announcements at this time? We did roll call.

7 MR. MARK MCANDREW: I got two
8 announcements if you want them?

9 MR. SCHUSTER: Okay.

10 MR. MARK MCANDREW: All right.
11 Recycling bins are available. And, you know,
12 utilizing either social media or the city's
13 website, there is a QR code below. And choose
14 what bins you need, a blue bin for commingled,
15 red bin for paper and cardboard.

16 Select your pickup date. So all of
17 this is done online. I'm not sure if you could
18 still go down to try to pick one up but like
19 the past. But you'll receive a confirmation,
20 you know, hopefully for those, you know, don't
21 utilize the internet or their e-mail that much,
22 you'll have another avenue to get them.

23 But on the day of pickup, bring your
24 proof of residency in Scranton to the
25 Department of Public Works on Poplar Avenue.

1 Spots are limited. One bin, of
2 course, each per house. Please sign up only if
3 your bin is unusable or if you do not have one.
4 Also, Sunday, April 26th from 9 to 12 p.m.,
5 Department of Public Works again at Poplar
6 Avenue will have the residential electronic
7 recycling event, which would include laptops,
8 desktops, printers, copiers, scanners,
9 keyboards, cables, cords, tablets, cell phones,
10 LCD monitors, CRT televisions, flat screens,
11 etc. And that's all I have. Thank you.

12 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
13 Anyone else have any announcements at this
14 time? All right. Fourth Order. Citizens
15 participation.

16 In looking at the list tonight, I do
17 notice that probably about half of the
18 individuals that signed up for the list are not
19 residents of the City of Scranton. So if you
20 are not a resident of the City of Scranton, you
21 won't be allowed to speak tonight. Our first
22 speaker is Shawn Zamorano.

23 MR. ZAMORANO: Good evening,
24 committee members. My name is Sean Zamorano
25 and I'm a United States Navy veteran. And I've

1 been consuming kratom for 10 years. I just
2 want to bring up firstly that there's three
3 state bills right now.

4 There's one in the Senate, and
5 there's two in the House. The Senate Bill 233
6 is basically KCPA style recommendation which is
7 Kratom Consumer Protection Act. And that
8 basically puts guardrails on plain leaf kratom.
9 And then House Bill 2058 is going to be 21 plus
10 testing label and fuel synthetic ban.

11 And then House Bill 2158
12 specifically targets synthetic 70H. So I just
13 hope that you guys know the difference between
14 70H and plain leaf kratom. Most of the
15 problems that you're probably seeing in your
16 city are coming from 70H at this time.

17 Like I said, I've been taking it for
18 10 years, PTSD, addiction issues. And I'm a
19 taxpayer. I have a wife. And I, you know, I
20 do my thing all the time, so that's all I have
21 to say. Sorry, I'm a little nervous. Thank
22 you.

23 MR. SCHUSTER: That's all right.
24 Thank you very much.

25 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Thank you for

1 your service.

2 MR. ZAMORANO: Thank you.

3 MR. SCHUSTER: Next speaker is Joan
4 Hodowanitz.

5 MS. HODOWANITZ: Joan Hodowanitz,
6 Scranton. With regard to the caucus tonight,
7 there's enough people here that will make
8 comments. But I will say that I was
9 disappointed that Director Cusick did not
10 decide to stay to listen to the comments from
11 many of his own employees.

12 They did him the courtesy of
13 courteously listening to his comments. He
14 should have done the same. He's not in the
15 Army anymore. In the Army, there's no such
16 thing as overtime when you're in uniform.
17 These people are not in uniform.

18 But he should have stayed and listened
19 to the comments. Hopefully somebody will
20 summarize what I said and put it on his desk.
21 Also, with the DPW, since the contract's been
22 approved, I would like to see the new contract
23 posted on the City's website under pension --
24 Collective Bargaining Agreements on the
25 archives.

1 You take the old contract, which is
2 a PDF file. You take the agreement, which is a
3 PDF file which consists of replace this
4 paragraph with this paragraph. You know, you
5 should have it done within an hour, get it
6 posted, get it done. We taxpayers want to see
7 it.

8 Councilman Flynn, if I had a hat I
9 would take it off to you. I think it's a great
10 initiative with you proposing the legislation
11 on kratom. I hate to see it, but I never heard
12 of it before which is maybe a good thing.

13 But my only comment that I'd like to
14 make is that we need to push local and state
15 legislators to make this a statewide ban
16 because it -- it's great that it will be banned
17 in Scranton. But if it's available in Old
18 Forge or Dunmore or Throop, you know, it
19 doesn't help us very much. It needs to be
20 statewide.

21 So I hope that you're in contact
22 with other representatives our state -- you
23 know, Kyle Donohue, Mullins and all the others.
24 Let's get it for the entire state.

25 This 5-D, the Soel Institute

1 contract on swimming and lifeguard training, I
2 guess. Good initiative, but what I couldn't
3 find out when I looked at the section on the
4 fees, is there a cap on how much money we could
5 dedicate to this because the fees are -- the
6 money spent is allocated by how many
7 participants we train. So do we have a cap?
8 Do we know -- is there an amount we cannot
9 exceed in the contract?

10 MR. SCHUSTER: I'll have to take a
11 closer look at it. I don't know offhand.

12 MS. HODOWANITZ: Yeah, I couldn't
13 find it because basically if you could train 10
14 lifeguards, well, 10 times X, you know, kind of
15 thing. But, you know, it would be nice to know
16 so you could handle it in future budgets and
17 make sure that goes in there.

18 And I went to the last County
19 Commissioner's meeting and the Commissioners
20 told me that I am going to be given the list of
21 people who kept their properties off the tax
22 rolls. When I get it, I will make sure that
23 you and the local newspaper get a copy.

24 I still want to see a wall of shame,
25 Scranton residents downstairs. All the other

1 county residents in the County Government
2 Center. If most of the people in this county
3 are decent hardworking people who pay their
4 taxes as painful as it is, anybody who managed
5 to keep their property off the tax rolls should
6 be ashamed of themselves. So wall of shame,
7 here it comes.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
9 The next individual on the list is Nate Rosan.
10 But it's -- the street that's on is not a
11 Scranton name. Okay. Mike Mancini.

12 MR. MANCINI: Thank you, Council
13 President Schuster. Good evening, Council
14 residents of Scranton. Tonight as promised,
15 part five of my series, the State of Scranton;
16 the topic, the Good People of Scranton.

17 I come before you not only as a
18 resident but also someone who shares the
19 everyday concerns of people across our
20 neighborhood, whether you live in West
21 Scranton, Hill Section, South Side, Green
22 Ridge, Keyser Valley, North Scranton, East or
23 West Mountain, the issues are strikingly
24 similar to the quality of life, public safety
25 and basic services.

1 Residents are asking for timely
2 pothole and pave cut repairs, stronger
3 enforcement of property maintenance, safe
4 neighborhoods and a city with doors open to
5 concerns.

6 These aren't abstract policy
7 debates. They affect how people feel walking
8 down their own roads, raising their families,
9 and investing in their homes. There is also a
10 growing concern about communication. Too often
11 residents feel like they do not know where to
12 turn and whether the concerns are being heard.

13 Transparency and responsiveness are
14 not exact -- not extras. They are essential to
15 maintaining public trust. We also cannot
16 ignore public safety. People want to feel
17 secure in their neighborhoods. That means
18 ensuring that our police and emergency services
19 are properly staffed, supported, deployed where
20 they're most needed.

21 But just as important as identifying
22 problems is showing residents that progress is
23 being made even small visible improvements,
24 cleared lots, fixed roads, responsive followups
25 can rebuild confidence in city government.

1 I urge Council to continue engaging
2 directly with residents to prioritize
3 neighborhood level concerns and to hold all
4 departments accountable for results. The
5 strength of Scranton has always come from its
6 neighborhoods. When they struggle, the entire
7 city feels it.

8 While eyes may be on what might be
9 happening tonight nationally, let us also
10 become grounded to what happened in our city.
11 When others like residents in Archbald and
12 other communities continue to assemble against
13 data centers, it strengthens their communities.

14 We here in Scranton must do the
15 same. I proudly speak weekly before Council
16 and our citizens because I care about the
17 future of our city. When you care about
18 something, you become a critic.

19 I have voiced concerns, descriptive
20 opinions, and offer creative ideas. I also see
21 this very same thing as many who have appeared
22 before Council about various topics and
23 concerns. When it comes to our future, more
24 should appear.

25 We have a Council who has been

1 proactive to many concerns on behalf of those
2 who appear regularly, we invite every good
3 person of Scranton to appear before Council to
4 voice their concerns. Most of our Council will
5 always understand that your concerns are more
6 important if they're important to you will be
7 just as important to them.

8 Our county has an amazing district
9 attorney who understands public safety is
10 nonnegotiable. He understands that a good
11 quality of life in every neighborhood is
12 essential to the future of our community.

13 To the good people of Scranton who
14 are proud to call Scranton home, continue to
15 participate in your city because good
16 stewardship starts with looking at just beyond
17 today of what Scranton has to offer its
18 residents, developers, and city employees.

19 Next week, part six of my series
20 about the state of Scranton. Tune in again
21 next week to find out. God bless our first
22 responders, our active military, our veterans
23 and the good people of Scranton. Good evening,
24 City Council.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Up next

1 is Rik Little.

2 MR. LITTLE: Hello, Council, Rik
3 Little. It's been quite a week. I'm reading
4 in the paper about all of these other
5 communities, some of them that I've lived in
6 having to do with -- well, what I read in the
7 paper here about protecting our neighbors and
8 the health and the safety of everybody.

9 That seems to be what government
10 really is. It's to protect people's health and
11 safety. I don't understand why, you know, I
12 mean, they're talking about kratom. But
13 there's just poison in the food. And it's been
14 discovered -- thank God for Robert F. Kennedy
15 and the whole MAHA thing.

16 But I'm losing my thought here.
17 Yeah, I used to live in Pike County. And
18 they're paying -- they're paying -- they're
19 getting paid up to like \$120 a day to put
20 people in prison. And they're getting paid by
21 the federal government.

22 And that's how I see all of these
23 counties and even the state. It's -- it's --
24 it's based on benefits from the federal
25 government ratcheted down to the people who get

1 it. And it's crazy to me, you know, \$120 a
2 person to put them in jail. I mean, our
3 borders were wide open. And to hear the County
4 Commissioner, you know, saying, you know, our
5 neighbors.

6 I mean, it's well documented all the
7 murders, the rapes where these people came from
8 from emptying out prisons and insane asylums.
9 And in this community, it's a big medical
10 community coming down from Geisinger and the
11 law enforcement that's put in front of it.

12 In the community it's the enforcers
13 of the law. But, you know, the police and the
14 sheriffs. I don't understand about this --
15 this -- there are two police officers that
16 worked at Scranton Housing Authority allegedly.

17 And they were punished, one of them
18 Herring{phonetic}, he lost his whole -- you
19 know, he worked -- whatever he did, you know,
20 everything goes in front of judges. And that's
21 the problem is -- is that the basic laws and
22 all of this stuff is judges.

23 And more and more it's partisan
24 judges. And we're at the precipice of, you
25 know, nuclear war in the Middle East. I hope

1 it works out. I think -- I think Putin's gonna
2 be the statesmen to bring this stuff around
3 because it's all who's going to buy from who
4 just like in this community, like, who's going
5 to be shovelling the snow? Who's going to be
6 fixing the roads? And who's doing it?

7 And all of it has to with
8 sustainability of not only the municipality,
9 but the county and the state and our country.
10 We almost lost our country. And I have big
11 disagreements about a lot of the stuff I've
12 been hearing that Trump is doing and the
13 alliances he's made because all my life it's
14 been, you know, the war in the Middle East and
15 it's Easter time.

16 And I remember 1972 the last time we
17 went up near the moon and now they're doing it
18 again. It's like -- déjà vu all over again.
19 And so I just encourage everybody to pray
20 what's going on so that we can come together
21 beyond -- as people beyond parties and unions
22 and groups to make Scranton great again.
23 Thanks.

24 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you, Mr.
25 Little. Next up is Ron Ellman.

1 MR. ELLMAN: My name was so far down
2 the list, I didn't know -- there was so many
3 out of the city people here. I won't try to be
4 any more controversial tonight. I'd like to
5 say that ICE represents everything good as far
6 as our government goes.

7 The opposite are the pros marching
8 up and down the street against ICE and against
9 our government -- our city government helping
10 them which is asinine. Gaughan was a failure
11 in this room and he's been a failure -- I can't
12 imagine him being reelected after the way the
13 taxes went.

14 But it's like being pregnant. You
15 are or you aren't. You are either for law and
16 order and ICE or you're against it. That's why
17 they have sanctuary cities because they're
18 against law and order and invite the chaos.

19 And if you're not doing anything
20 wrong, migrant or no migrant, you shouldn't
21 have any fears. The problem is illegals.
22 They're criminals. I heard people in this room
23 talk about their grandparents and they didn't
24 swim illegally enter into the country. They
25 worked.

1 My grandparents came and landed in
2 New York City and Baltimore. And all I know is
3 they got off a boat. And to change my
4 thinking, I was listening to Joan about the tax
5 exemptions. There used to be a man come -- a
6 couple that come to the Taurus Club, I don't
7 know, 10 or 12 years ago.

8 They got a house from Marywood that
9 somebody had donated. And they used to brag
10 how many years he had been there without paying
11 the taxes. And it must have been quite a large
12 house.

13 Last year, and the year before, I
14 stood right here complaining about Cochran
15 buying a little piece of land on Providence --
16 on Parker Street and renting it to the city.
17 He bought that in 2010. And a year ago, it was
18 still tax exempt. That's an -- that's an
19 example of how the city favors some people and
20 not others.

21 Paige refuses to address the fact
22 Cochran and an accomplice over at PennDOT
23 rented the city property to the -- PennDOT.
24 That's tax money. I told you they cut down the
25 200-year-old tree that the forester told me

1 tried to save.

2 The taxpayers paid for it. PennDOT
3 paid to cut the tree down. Then they were so
4 worried about my complaining, they sent a crew
5 over to grind it up to sawdust. Paige Cagnetti
6 could care less about what's going on in the
7 city as long as it doesn't affect her friends
8 downtown.

9 On North Main Avenue by the fire
10 station there's two places -- two cuts from one
11 of the utilities. It must be a 3, 4 inch
12 drop. It's been there for a month. See,
13 that's how the city's been run for the last few
14 years. You come in here and nothing's done.

15 You -- half the time somebody is
16 looking at their computer, whatever, back
17 there. I'll say one thing when I had the
18 complaint and you came to my house to see what
19 I was complaining about, the city needs more of
20 that. I know it's on your own time.

21 But the city needs more -- more from
22 the -- the residents need more from the people
23 that we're paying to be up there and be
24 downstairs in that office, not running around
25 trying to get reelected. Thank you.

1 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Next is
2 Les Spindler.

3 MR. SPINDLER: Good evening,
4 Council, Les Spindler, city resident,
5 homeowner. I have an announcement. I'm
6 surprised that nobody from Council made this
7 announcement.

8 On Sunday, April 19th, there's a
9 benefit for Police Officer Nancy Baumann. I've
10 know Nancy for over 20 years. She's a good
11 friend. And she's undergoing treatments for
12 blood cancer. So I appreciate everybody
13 coming. I know it's going to be a big crowd.
14 It's at the FOP Lodge at 402 Railroad Avenue
15 from one to five.

16 I hope everybody will show up. And
17 not only do I know Nancy, but Nancy's son is
18 the father of my newest grandchild. I have a
19 grandchild born last November, and her son
20 Jessie's the father. So we're always praying
21 for Nancy to get better. And I hope everybody
22 could show up.

23 Next thing, I want to commend
24 Council and District Attorney Gallagher for
25 looking to ban this kratom. It's -- I don't

1 know if it's true or not, but a neighbor of
2 mine just told me last week. I never heard of
3 it. But she told me last week that that idiot
4 that killed the two people in the Jermyn
5 Apartments was on that. And he was -- having
6 hallucin -- he was hallucinogenic.

7 It's no good, but just banning it in
8 the city isn't good like Joan said. You have
9 to do at least the countywide. If you ban it
10 in the city, they could go to Dunmore or Taylor
11 and get it. But, like, I agree with her. It
12 should be statewide.

13 We should get involved with Senator
14 Marty Flynn and Bridget Kosierowski and Kyle
15 Donohue, Kyle Mullins and get a bill to ban it
16 statewide.

17 Next thing, last week I spoke about
18 some of the clearing -- that hill on Euclid
19 Avenue. And yesterday I leave my house, I'm
20 going to Main Avenue on Euclid Avenue, couldn't
21 get out to Main Avenue that way. It was
22 blocked off.

23 And I stopped and asked the guys
24 today what they're doing. That's going to be a
25 one way anymore. You can't get onto Main

1 Avenue from Bulwer Street or Euclid Avenue or
2 Dorothy Street. When I leave my house, I'll
3 have to get to Farr Street to get to Main
4 Avenue. They said they don't want people
5 making a left turn there.

6 So, like, they showed me what
7 they're going to do. There's going to be,
8 like, they're putting new sidewalks in.
9 They're putting a retaining wall on that --
10 they dug out part of that hill.

11 And that's where that West Scranton
12 sign is going to be, President Shuster, you
13 were talking about. They're going to put a
14 retaining wall in and that the sign is going to
15 be on top of the retaining well.

16 MR. SCHUSTER: They're going to make
17 Bulwer a one way. Is that what you were
18 saying?

19 MR. SPINDLER: What's that?

20 MR. SCHUSTER: They're going to make
21 Bulwer Street a one way?

22 MR. SPINDLER: No, just that -- when
23 you go down the hill from Dorothy or Euclid
24 Avenue, that's -- you can't go -- you won't be
25 able to get out that way. People could come

1 off Main Avenue, go up Dorothy and Euclid. But
2 they don't want people turning onto Main
3 Avenue, the left turn because there's too many
4 accidents they said. And they said everybody's
5 for it.

6 I'm not, but -- no, you can't --
7 you won't -- they're going to put like an
8 island blocking off half the road. You could
9 get into Dorothy Street, you know, off Main
10 Avenue. You could turn left or right off Main
11 Avenue.

12 But I don't know how long it's going
13 to take. But they're moving along. Next, on
14 the Green Ridge Street Bridge Project, again,
15 they're not working on it today. They did a
16 little work yesterday and then they left.

17 Now, I hear on the news tonight
18 where's there's going -- PennDOT is going to be
19 busy all summer with different projects. I
20 hope they're not going to forget about the
21 Green Ridge Street project. That should have
22 been done already.

23 And again, I spoke about it months
24 ago. On Green Ridge Street in front of
25 Fidelity Bank, that lane is blocked off.

1 There's no reason for that to be blocked off.
2 I don't know why it is.

3 Next thing, back to the pave cut
4 inspectors. These people are not doing their
5 jobs. I want all of you people some day drive
6 up Euclid Avenue from Dorothy Street to get to
7 Dickson Avenue, and you'll see how terrible it
8 is.

9 And the one gentleman I spoke to
10 today about that project on the hill there, he
11 works for Reilly Associates. He said he
12 paved -- he paves roads. He paved Euclid
13 inside the development. But he agrees with me.
14 He said from Dorothy all the way to the
15 development, it should be paved curb to curb,
16 that -- Sumner Avenue and Garfield Avenue.

17 They all have to be paved curb to
18 curb. They're not doing their jobs. And they
19 lied here. They said that they're -- what
20 they're doing now is better than the old
21 system. I mean, they lied and Eileen Cipriani
22 swears to. They're all liars. Thank you.

23 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Next up
24 is Stan Dombrowski. Please state your address
25 as well.

1 MR. DOMBROWSKI: Sure, Stan
2 Dombrowski, 1213 Olive Street. I've been a
3 resident for about 13 years. I'd like to speak
4 about the positive effects kratom has had on my
5 life. I believe to some degree it's -- it
6 actually saved my life.

7 I had a stone wall bury me in a
8 basement of a home I was renting approximately
9 10 years ago. I had a severe back injury from
10 that accident. I became addicted to the pain
11 medication over a period of two years, all
12 prescribed by a family doctor, then that pain
13 medication was increased by a pain doctor, a
14 local physiatrist.

15 Pain continued and the dosage of
16 pain medication went up accordingly. I asked
17 my doctor to help me stop. And he really had
18 no answer for me. You know, using the pain
19 medication was really the only -- only answer.
20 We discussed weaning off would be uncomfortable
21 to say the least, painful, ton of side effects.

22 And then if I did wean off, I had to
23 deal with the pain, inability to work. I was
24 laid up for most of those two years. I had a
25 wife and a son at the time. I reached out to

1 the internet I think like most do when they're,
2 you know, distressed look for something
3 natural, a way to get off the, you know, these
4 pain medications, found a natural product
5 called kratom, knew nothing about it.

6 And from what I know now, it was
7 really early in the inception of this plant,
8 kind of getting out into the open. I believe
9 at the time there were -- they believe there
10 were a couple million people that knew about it
11 in the United States. It's since, you know,
12 grown largely.

13 But after that research, I was able
14 to dial up a serving size to help me completely
15 get off the pain medication in about three
16 weeks. My physiatrist was pretty amazed to say
17 the least. Although he couldn't tell me to
18 continue to use kratom, he kind of new that
19 something good was going on here.

20 I gave him some literature. There
21 was a book out of Drexel. There's a professor
22 out of Drexel wrote about mitragynine and other
23 nonopioid sources of pain relief, so a lot of
24 this history on this plant. And there's a lot
25 of information.

1 If you look for it I'd say beyond --
2 beyond the first five pages of Google. I think
3 that's what most people do. Find anything
4 negative or anything concerning they, you know,
5 go to Google and that's as far as they look.
6 So for me, kratom allowed me to manage my pain.
7 It was nonaddictive.

8 I had no side effects. My lab
9 reports came back really well. And some things
10 like my blood pressure actually came down. It
11 allowed me to continue to manage the pain as I
12 was -- and I was not addicted, no side effects.
13 I continued to take kratom until I no longer
14 needed pain control for my back.

15 I stopped using kratom with --
16 without withdrawal. The botanical I took was
17 leaf, all natural or -- all natural, rather.
18 It came from a tree. There was nothing
19 synthetic about it. It's just a leaf.

20 I bought powder. And I consumed
21 that powder the way you would protein powder or
22 creatine whatever -- I viewed it as a
23 supplement that, as I said, saved my life.
24 I've recommended it to many people over the
25 last 10 years, hundreds and hundreds probably

1 have used it for the same reason.

2 My own father used it when he had
3 cancer to relieve his pain. And he had a host
4 of other medications the doctors were willing
5 to give him and he asked me for this, you know,
6 by choice.

7 I'd suggest, you know, looking at
8 who is able to buy this botanical, absolutely
9 no sale to minors, a complete ban on synthetic
10 derivatives. Anything that is not made from
11 that original, you know, plant material to me
12 is not good. I would say do the research.

13 Again, I say pass those first five
14 pages of Google. I think that's the easy out
15 for most people. Go to page 20. Start looking
16 at the studies, look what some of the doctors
17 who believe in this think about it.

18 Definitely think it needs to be
19 regulated, but again, in the form of leaf, not
20 allowing a 7-OH product or any nonnatural
21 version. You could tell from the turnout in
22 this room that it speaks volumes about what
23 this plant does for people. And as I said, I
24 would say continue to research it and let it
25 save lives. Thank you.

1 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

2 (Video interruption.)

3 MS. KUCHARSKI: Excuse me, I'm a
4 little bit nervous. I've been a kratom
5 consumer for the last nine years. Before that
6 I was taking pharmaceutical opiates. And I'm
7 saying as the other man, I researched
8 alternative ways to, you know, manage my pain
9 without being a slave to Big Pharma.

10 And I came across the natural leaf
11 kratom. I did a lot of research before I
12 switched. I switched over. And I've been able
13 to be present for my children, for my
14 grandchildren to lead a normal productive life.

15 I just bought a house in Scranton in
16 January. So I'm invested in the city. But, I
17 mean, if this gets taken away from me, I would
18 have to consider selling my house and moving
19 because I would not be able to lead a
20 productive life.

21 This is what lets me manage and be a
22 productive member of society without being in a
23 trance and feeling like a zombie. I'm a normal
24 person doing normal things.

25 And I would ask you to please

1 consider the three bills that are at the state
2 level before you push Scranton ban through.
3 That's about all I have to say. Thank you.

4 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. We have
5 Ashley Roshman -- something to that effect.
6 Jordan Moser? That exhausts our list for
7 Scranton residents here. Anyone -- Scranton
8 resident like to speak? Hang on. Are you a
9 Scranton resident, sir?

10 MR. HOMECK: Yes.

11 MR. SCHUSTER: If you're a Scranton
12 resident, you could come up and speak.

13 MR. HOMECK: My name is a David
14 Homeck{phonetic}. I live at 1825 Stafford
15 Avenue in Valley View Terrace. I've been a
16 resident for about 15 years. I have sciatica
17 pain. I developed sciatica pain. I'm going to
18 be 69 tomorrow.

19 If you take the 7-OH off the market,
20 I have no hope of -- I get that terrible pain.
21 I have terrible pain, the worst pain I ever had
22 for 10 days about 7 months ago. I didn't take
23 the kratom, but I wish I did -- the 7-OH
24 because it takes the pain away.

25 You're supposed to take one pill a

1 day and these drug addicts are taking 10 pills
2 a day. I don't know how they're not throwing
3 up because I was -- I tried taking one pill a
4 day. I was throwing up like crazy. You're
5 supposed to cut it four times and take
6 one-fourth of the pill every five hours or
7 something.

8 And it takes the pain right away.
9 And if you take it off the market -- you go to
10 a doctor, the doctor won't give you nothin for
11 pain. They said take two Tylenol. It's like
12 they live in the dark ages. You can't get no
13 pain pills off a doctor. The 7-0H, I said,
14 wow, great, you know, the doctor should be able
15 to prescribe them or something.

16 Give it to the doctors to prescribe
17 if you want to take them out of the tobacco
18 stores. I hate to say it, but if I can't get a
19 pain pill or if I go to a ball game like the
20 Red Barons or Philadelphia Eagles or some
21 stupid game, I'm only going to stand up
22 halfway. I'm not going to stand up all the
23 way. (Inaudible) They won't give you a pain
24 pill.

25 I'll be taking it to Governor

1 Shapiro, our Governor, taking 7-0H off the
2 market or something because I can't get a pain
3 pill. I don't know. I have a lot written
4 down. But I'm a stimulant addict. I'm not a
5 downer addicted. I'm sorry.

6 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

7 MR. COYNE: Good evening, Tom Coyne,
8 Minooka. It's interesting the snow removal
9 that we had here tonight. What I found
10 interesting about it was, when I was shocked
11 when they were again dumping it down near the
12 riverbanks.

13 Many, many years ago, I remember the
14 EPA coming in and fining the City of Scranton
15 for putting it down there. And it's not just,
16 oh, we put it down there temporarily and then
17 we're going to come back and scoop it up. It
18 melts the salt. And as the salt melts the
19 snow, it soaks into the ground.

20 And then when rainfall comes, it
21 washes the salt in the ground right into the
22 river. That's why it's banned from being
23 anywhere near the river, not just because of
24 dumping into it, it's because the concentrated
25 rock salt that was laying upon the ground

1 washing down and even by natural rainfall.

2 I understand they want to do
3 expedience. But is expedience for plowing
4 Center City more important than taking care of
5 the waterways and downstream safety and
6 wildlife? We had a gigantic fit when the water
7 company dumped silt into the stream.

8 Yet, the city wants to dump salt
9 into the stream. What does rock salt do to
10 fresh water fish? I don't think it's healthy.

11 The DPW Director also mentioned that
12 he does not watch Council. I guess he's not
13 that interested in listening to Citizens
14 Participation and what the people here have to
15 say.

16 As a Director of DPW, I would be
17 interested in what the public had to say at
18 this podium related to DPW. They do a good
19 job. But not watching this is removing
20 feedback from outside the administrative loop
21 from the actual citizens who they work for.
22 And that's kind of important.

23 On the kratom adult legislation, if
24 it's legal, why are we banning it for people
25 themselves? I understand we can ban products

1 in stores. But possession of kratom if it's
2 legal in the state, I don't see what grounds we
3 have to make it illegal for possession here.

4 I'm not saying for distribution
5 because distribution is a whole different
6 thing. It's not I'm a storeowner and I only
7 possess 50 cases of it, but individual
8 possession that they use for medical needs
9 should not be banned as long as it's legal.

10 If you're that worried about
11 something that's -- that's currently legal
12 that's harmful, are you going to ban cigarettes
13 in the City of Scranton? Are you going to ban
14 alcohol in the City of Scranton? It's a -- a
15 lot of drugs are made from natural products.

16 Have any of you ever taken aspirin?
17 It was originated from willow bark. It's a
18 painkiller from willow bark. There are known
19 and documented pain relieving products from
20 plant life. I'm not saying that you shouldn't
21 ban kids from it.

22 I'm not saying that you shouldn't
23 ban the sale of it in city stores. But I am
24 saying that possession of it should not be in
25 this legislation because it's not illegal.

1 I was injured last week so I
2 couldn't come in. So I didn't speak on 3-C,
3 the Recovery Act transfers. I see they moved a
4 quarter of a million dollars from the Minooka
5 stormwater project to Lindy Creek. How will
6 that impact people who have been waiting for 60
7 to 70 years for the fixes?

8 And how is the funding guaranteed to
9 be replaced? ARPA was a one-shot grant handed
10 to the neighborhoods. And don't tell me they
11 stole a secured partial funding for maybe a
12 grant leaving that section again to tread water
13 for another 60 years.

14 Half a million dollars was sucked
15 out of a neighborhood it was earmarked for.
16 How's that being replaced? And can we get an
17 update on the Gerrity's gift cards? We had a
18 public show before the election of one gift
19 card being put out to one of the residents
20 right before election to appear in the
21 newspaper.

22 What's the status of them because I
23 believe there was \$1,000 worth of them. Can we
24 get a listing even by neighborhoods that have
25 been distributed and the number of them at

1 least? We should know -- not the exact
2 neighbors. I don't need that.

3 But it would be nice to know if 85
4 percent of them are being delivered to one
5 community. Thank you and have a good evening.

6 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Any other
7 city residents that would like to speak?

8 MS. O'MALLEY: Good evening. My
9 name is Kathy O'Malley. I was here last week
10 regarding the issue with the no parking sign at
11 the dead end of South Irving.

12 It's come to my attention that the
13 no parking sign that had originally been zip
14 tied to the fence had according to another
15 homeowner on the street had actually witnessed
16 another resident zip tying the sign to the
17 chain link fence.

18 And another person who lives on the
19 street assisted her in doing so. My question
20 is, the sign that was put up was a legitimate
21 city sign. My sister researched it. You
22 cannot purchase these signs anywhere. It has
23 to come from the city.

24 And as far as I know, the DPW is
25 responsible for the signs. I could be wrong.

1 But I'm pretty sure it's their responsibility.

2 And shortly after that just within a
3 week or so, a permanent city sign had been
4 erected. And as we know from last week, we
5 know that that sign is incorrect that's up
6 there. It says no parking with arrows pointing
7 in either direction.

8 And according to everyone I've
9 spoken to, the two curbside spots are
10 legitimate parking spots. Mr. Voldenberg had
11 suggested calling Eileen Cipriani's office,
12 which I did. And I spoke to Caleb, her
13 assistant who is very helpful.

14 And he said the whole city is
15 basically aware of the issue of the no parking
16 sign on South Irving. So each department I'm
17 sure he said he's received numerous e-mails and
18 phone calls regarding the situation from
19 concerned residents with the parking being
20 taken away.

21 After I left Council last week, I
22 left a little early. And after I got home I
23 found out that Mr. Voldenberg had said that
24 when Mr. Schuster had asked about, you know, to
25 try to clear up the confusion. He had said

1 it's with legal and they're trying to make
2 those -- get an ordinance to get those two
3 spots taken away.

4 When I spoke to Caleb, he said that
5 you would have to get an ordinance. And then
6 it would have to go before Council to be voted
7 on to have those spots removed. He said it's
8 nowhere near having that done.

9 My concern is, how does a city
10 resident get ahold of a city sign? Shouldn't
11 that come from the city? And how -- you know,
12 was this able to be left up there and also,
13 having called police on numerous occasions
14 about people parking in legal parking spots
15 wasting police officers's time, but she was
16 fully aware that that sign and those spots --
17 the spots were legal.

18 The sign was not. So I would really
19 like to get into, you know, what is actually
20 going on here. And someone who was supposed to
21 give me a call over the week as to who okayed
22 those signs. I did not get a call. So I'm
23 wondering if you could give me that information
24 this evening if you found that information out.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: I don't believe we

1 found that out, have we, Frank?

2 MR. VOLDENBERG: The signs that are
3 presently there -- the dead end street signs
4 and the no parking sign were reviewed by
5 Mr. Reilly from Reilly Associates and placed
6 almost immediately after they were requested.

7 But they do have to do a further
8 study to determine the two spots which will
9 require an ordinance. That's also with the
10 City Engineer.

11 MS. O'MALLEY: Okay.

12 MR. VOLDENBERG: And as of this
13 afternoon, we haven't had a report as of yet.

14 MR. SCHUSTER: So we're still
15 waiting back from the City Engineer.

16 MS. O'MALLEY: Okay. My question is
17 though, the parking that has been legal. My
18 family's lived there for generations. There's
19 never been an issue with people parking there.
20 There's never been an accident. And I know
21 Caleb said that Mr. Cusick from the DPW wants
22 to have that sign left there.

23 Well, that's fine for the travel
24 way, the center spot which we know is an
25 illegal spot. But the correct signage needs to

1 be put there so that people know that you could
2 still park curbside. And another issue was
3 having enough room for emergency vehicles to do
4 K-turns.

5 Again, for over a hundred years
6 there's never been an instance where an
7 emergency vehicle had a problem turning around
8 on that street. However, the homeowner who
9 owns the driveway at the end of the street has
10 begun parking her vehicle blocking the driveway
11 so that people cannot even make a turn.

12 And one of the neighbors when she
13 came down the street pulled into the driveway
14 to the left to back up. Before she could even
15 start to back up, the homeowner came out and
16 started yelling at her not to turn around in
17 her driveway.

18 So, I mean, it's getting a little
19 crazy. I would just like to get it resolved
20 and have those two parking spots left alone.
21 We need to have that there for the residents of
22 the street. There is nowhere else to park. We
23 were short on space to begin with. And with
24 those spots gone, it's even worse.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

1 MS. O'MALLEY: Thank you.

2 MR. PUGLIESE: Good evening,
3 Council, Robert Pugliese, City of Scranton.
4 Robert Pugliese, just a couple things on the
5 caucus. You mention the brine truck. I've
6 operated it a couple times, not as often as
7 some of those other guys.

8 It's pretty much impossible to get
9 the whole city with one truck. I think we all
10 could agree to that. By the time you fill the
11 tank, it takes time. The state does use it.
12 The state is a lot different than the city.

13 The state jumps on 81 just say River
14 Street and takes it to the Carbondale exit,
15 gets off and gets back on. They got traffic
16 constantly and that helps out a lot. The
17 training -- training is always good.

18 With the trees, the thing with the
19 trees is, me, personally, I've done the tree
20 job for months. When our tree guy went out I
21 was bottom guy so I had to do it. The problem
22 with this is our jobs driving truck, running
23 heavy equipment, paving, trees, a lot of our
24 jobs you need -- it's time in the seat, you
25 know, you could hook it up.

1 You could look by papers, you could
2 do all of that. You got to do it. It's just
3 the nature of our type of work. So training is
4 good. And it helps. And it's definitely a
5 plus. But it can't -- I don't think it could
6 be everything. It's in steps.

7 What else -- the salt shed, I would
8 say that's probably our big issue. Our salt
9 shed that we have now is quite significantly
10 smaller than the old one. I don't know exactly
11 how many tonnage it holds. I think it was
12 1,300 for the new one and 800 for the old one.

13 I want to say that might be reversed
14 because I loaded salt on our own one for years,
15 and 1,300 ton fit in there. We used to put
16 three quarters of the way up with salt and
17 still had room for topsoil and cold patch all
18 under the same tent.

19 The way I looked at it, there's ribs
20 in there in the old one and they used to hold
21 roughly 200 ton per rib working from the back
22 out. This one, unless you load it with a
23 conveyor belt which we do not, I can't see it
24 holding 1,300 ton. We use a loader. That salt
25 shed -- the new one that we have has walls that

1 are built inside of it that are so high.

2 I could stack the salt up higher.

3 And I say this because I'm usually a guy on the
4 loader. I'm a heavy equipment operator. And
5 it spills over the sides if you go too high.
6 And then that salt is no good because it's in
7 between the blocks that the tarp is on and the
8 wall that's keeping it in.

9 So there's like a 3 foot gap on each
10 side of the salt shed. And if salt falls over
11 on the back and on the sides, it's pretty much
12 junk, garbage, unusable. That's -- that's what
13 I had with the whole caucus.

14 There's so many different things,
15 the trucks -- there's a couple trucks that he
16 said were broken and they are. But these
17 trucks are not broke to where they're going to
18 be put back on the road. One, the trainee is
19 gone and one -- like, these trucks are done,
20 like, scrap pretty much. I think that's pretty
21 much all I have on that. Thank you.

22 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

23 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Excuse me, one
24 quick question. Like, when you guys have a big
25 storm pre or post, does all -- does he pull --

1 does DPW management pull all the drivers in and
2 kind of go over what the plan is or -- and then
3 reflect on the storm after?

4 MR. PUGLIESE: A lot of guys who
5 come in I'm going say on a regular basis, they
6 do -- and he was talking about -- they're good
7 at what they do.

8 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Right.

9 MR. PUGLIESE: So -- yes, that does
10 happen. The problem is like the presalt, I
11 don't necessarily agree with that because he
12 says the salt spreads all over the place.
13 There's dials in those trucks. One is for an
14 auger, which determines how much salt you're
15 putting out.

16 And the other one is the spinner,
17 which tells you how much -- how wide you're
18 broadcasting it. So you adjust them. And me
19 personally in salt truck, I'm constantly
20 moving the dials. If I'm in an alley, I'm not
21 going to spread it -- I'm not going to put my
22 dial on a six or a seven. I'm going put it on
23 a two, maybe three.

24 And when I'm on the street, okay,
25 now I got to move it up to four, maybe five.

1 You got to -- you adjust it constantly and you
2 got to look out the rearview mirror basically
3 the whole time.

4 Other than that, that's -- those
5 guys who come in -- they -- they're good at
6 what they do and they know what they're doing.

7 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Awesome. Thank
8 you.

9 MR. SCHUSTER: I just have one
10 question. Do you think the inner walls in the
11 newer salt shed is limiting the capacity of
12 salt that could be placed inside the shed?

13 MR. PUGLIESE: Yes, definitely.

14 MR. SCHUSTER: Okay.

15 MR. PUGLIESE: Our old salt shed, I
16 want to say is -- I don't know the new one, but
17 our old one is I think 60 feet wide by 90-some
18 feet long. I'm pretty sure that's that big.

19 MR. SCHUSTER: Okay.

20 MR. PUGLIESE: Like I said, the
21 state uses conveyor belts when they get so
22 much. And that's how they stack their salt.
23 So they're able to go up higher without going
24 wider. I don't -- and I say me -- I don't have
25 that ability because I'm using a front end

1 loader and I'm pushing it up.

2 When I load it, the bumper of the
3 truck -- my machine is literally on the
4 blacktop I can't go any higher.

5 MR. SCHUSTER: Yeah, that answers my
6 question. Thank you.

7 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Thank you.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Any other Scranton
9 residents that want to speak to Council?

10 MR. FEDORCHAK: Hello, John
11 Fedorchak, West Scranton. I'm also a little
12 nervous. But I'm here with part of a big group
13 of people that are definitely not in support of
14 a kratom ban.

15 You know, we're all different types
16 of people. A lot of people are -- (video
17 interruption) for sure that's definitely not.
18 People with mental health issues use it for
19 relief, chronic pain. I definitely will say,
20 you know, sobriety.

21 People with -- who have potentially
22 suffered sobriety issues in the past also, you
23 know, look to it for relief. And, you know, to
24 turn away from prescription, street drugs, you
25 know, everybody has a story. I, myself, do not

1 use it as something to turn away -- or like to
2 be sober per se.

3 I don't consume alcohol which is,
4 you know, a big -- a lot of people used to say
5 it's a great alternative to alcohol. But I
6 don't even compare it like that. It's not
7 as -- it's not a similar feeling to that. You
8 know, a total kratom ban would -- would cause a
9 lot of pain and suffering for people that have
10 turned to this for positive outcomes.

11 And, you know, they're all
12 functioning. I could say with the group that I
13 came tonight, they're all functioning. They
14 all have families they support. None of them
15 have major issues. A lot of them come from,
16 you know, previous drug addiction.

17 And they're all functioning and in
18 line, as you would say. You know, I would
19 support a 70 ban because I think the 70 has
20 turned kratom into such a bad, like, a bad
21 name. You know, it's kratom leaf in leaf form
22 or powder form is not as potent and dangerous
23 as the 70 which chemically altered, yes, 400
24 times less.

25 Yeah, the potency of it is 400 times

1 less. And to get that 70 product, they are
2 chemically altering kratom with products like
3 acetone and other chemical that are not good to
4 consume. Now, while I think the bill that you
5 have now, if I'm not wrong, is completely
6 banning kratom products in the Scranton area
7 including leaf.

8 I don't think that's -- that's going
9 to be a positive outcome for the community.
10 Banning 70 products will absolutely be a
11 positive outcome. But not leaving, like,
12 leaving the natural side of it, like, to, you
13 know, to the people that consume it for those
14 positive reasons is really hurting the
15 community and the people that consume it.

16 And the people that turn away from
17 opioids and other hard drugs, I think it's
18 super important that we don't look at kratom as
19 a whole including 70 in that. 70 is a
20 completely different product, not even close to
21 the same as kratom leaf which I consume
22 regularly.

23 And I work a full-time job,
24 potentially sometimes two jobs. I pay my
25 bills. I pay my rent, like, I'm a functioning

1 member of society just as many of the people
2 that are here tonight who have come to support
3 it.

4 Actually I could say all of the
5 people that I came with tonight are functioning
6 members of society. And they use kratom. So
7 that's all I have to say.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Any other
9 resident from Scranton that would like to
10 speak? No questions at this time.

11 MR. MARGAVITCH: Council, should I
12 give them to Kathy to pass out? Is that how
13 you're still doing it?

14 MR. SCHUSTER: Yes. Yes. And
15 please state your name and address.

16 MR. MARGAVITCH: Mark Margavitch.

17 MR. SCHUSTER: Address as well,
18 Mark.

19 MR. MARGAVITCH: Scranton. Good
20 evening, Council. So I have a list of
21 questions here. But before I do get that, I
22 just have one comment to make about the DPW
23 contract. I commend the person who spoke weeks
24 ago about the DPW and the two gentlemen that I
25 believe came with him.

1 I just found that interesting that
2 all of a sudden the Mayor decided to come to an
3 agreement shortly thereafter that. I just
4 found the timing to be a little odd. But I'm
5 happy they came and spoke their side of the
6 story.

7 So Council, I have seven questions
8 in front of you. Do you agree that City
9 Council has an obligation to ensure that
10 ordinances are enforced as written; yes or no?"
11 (video interruption.) I have six more questions
12 Council. Yes.

13 MR. SCHUSTER: Continue with your
14 questions.

15 MR. MARGAVITCH: Well, I'd like to
16 get answers. Does that obligation apply both
17 when administration fails to follow an
18 ordinance and when it enforces something not
19 contained in the ordinance; yes or no? How
20 about if we play if you don't say anything it's
21 no?

22 Once Council becomes aware of either
23 situation does that trigger responsibility to
24 act? And should that action occur immediately
25 once you have that knowledge?

1 Now, Council, did you get your
2 e-mails fixed? I know you were having problems
3 with e-mails. I'm not sure. So I e-mailed
4 Council twice in the last two weeks. And these
5 are the following questions that I asked.

6 Where in the rental registration
7 ordinance is condemnation authorized as an
8 enforcement tool and can you identify that
9 authority today; yes or no?

10 I also asked whether the city is
11 citing rental registration violations through
12 the quality of life ordinance, specifically
13 prohibited occupancy. Are you aware of that
14 practice; yes or no? Council, yes or no; are
15 you aware?

16 MR. SCHUSTER: So we've done this
17 before, Mr. Margavitch. You could continue
18 with the questions.

19 MR. MARGAVITCH: Well, yes, but I
20 just want to know were you aware; yes or no?

21 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: I guess my first
22 question is, have you sent these questions to
23 the appropriate department and have they
24 answered you? And if so, what were their
25 answers? Because if you're saying enforcing,

1 yes, we write the ordinances, correct?

2 MR. MARGAVITCH: Correct.

3 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Each department
4 has to enforce it. So have you gone to those
5 departments and had those conversation with
6 anybody in that office?

7 MR. MARGAVITCH: I tried but I
8 walked in to the door. It's still locked.

9 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Did you try to
10 call and schedule?

11 MR. MARGAVITCH: No.

12 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Well, that -- I
13 mean, I believe, the LIPS Department is the
14 only door that you actually can get into that
15 is not locked, correct? That's the only door
16 that you could walk right in and speak to them.

17 MR. MARGAVITCH: Yes.

18 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: So have you
19 tried that?

20 MR. MARGAVITCH: Yes, but I did
21 e-mail Council. Did you forward my e-mail onto
22 the appropriate departments as if it was a
23 pothole?

24 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: I believe we
25 have forwarded these questions before, but I

1 will double-check. And if not, we will forward
2 it.

3 MR. MARGAVITCH: I haven't heard
4 anything.

5 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: A lot people
6 come up and ask us direct questions. And
7 everybody sees, we ask questions on behalf of
8 residents. But there is so many times where we
9 don't get answers ourself.

10 But the first question I always ask,
11 did you go to that department and ask them the
12 question because they're the ones who enforce
13 the ordinance. And to my understanding right
14 now, that answer is no, correct?

15 MR. MARGAVITCH: Correct.

16 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Okay. My -- I
17 would encourage you to try that first. While
18 you're doing that, we will take your questions
19 and also forward it. But I also encourage you
20 to take that route. I think that route is a
21 lot -- since being on Council and watching
22 Council too in past years, I believe that has
23 been skipped sometimes.

24 We're here to assist and we will
25 definitely help. But I would also encourage

1 you to go that route too because they handle
2 the day to day. And they're supposed to
3 enforce the ordinance that we pass.

4 MR. MARGAVITCH: Correct. But my
5 question was to Council if you were aware of an
6 ordinance not being followed, would you act?
7 So I can't ask --

8 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: We would need an
9 example and look into it, correct?

10 MR. MARGAVITCH: I can't ask the
11 Mayor if she would be aware of or something
12 City Council would do. That's why I addressed
13 it to City Council.

14 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yeah, we would
15 look into anything that is sent to us.

16 MR. MARGAVITCH: Okay. All right.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Any other
19 Scranton resident would like to address
20 Council? All right. Fifth Order, Mr.
21 Voldenberg.

22 MR. VOLDENBERG: FIFTH ORDER. 5-A.
23 MOTIONS.

24 MR. SCHUSTER: Dr. Rothchild, any
25 motions or comments at this time?

1 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes, I do. What
2 I'll be addressing tonight is the kratom
3 ordinance and legislation that's on our agenda
4 tonight, especially given the amount of people
5 who have been in contact with Council over the
6 past day or so and the number of people who
7 attended tonight to speak about it.

8 So first, I'd like to note that I
9 had not received communication from my
10 colleagues about this ordinance or yesterday's
11 press conference until the evening of Easter
12 Sunday. And this gave me limited amount of
13 time to review the legislation.

14 This is a matter I was not
15 previously educated on. And when I've spoken
16 to others about it over the last two days, no
17 one I knew was familiar with kratom with the
18 substance.

19 Some of the conversations included
20 other medical professionals, a person whose
21 daughter had tragically passed for fentanyl
22 overdose, and a law enforcement professional.
23 As a physical therapist with nearly 12 years of
24 experience, I've treated a great number of
25 patients with Chronic Pain Syndrome and chronic

1 pain conditions.

2 And I always review and discuss
3 their medications, supplements, and other pain
4 relief items or things that they've utilized to
5 help manage their pain. I can't prescribe
6 medication, but we, at least, have that
7 discussion so that I'm aware of what they're
8 taking or utilizing to help with the pain if
9 there is any other things that I can help with.

10 And I've seen patients who have been
11 using opioid medications long-term, some for
12 30-plus years. I don't recall patients who
13 have discussed their use of kratom with me.
14 And that doesn't mean that that they weren't.
15 I'm just not aware of patients who have or that
16 has not -- has not come up. So I'm surprised
17 that it hasn't come up sooner.

18 Historically when legislation has
19 been developed from Council because the bulk of
20 what we have comes from the administration or
21 legal department, we discuss the concept
22 usually as a Council at caucus or in a
23 one-on-one conversation as to avoid violation
24 of the Sunshine Act.

25 Then the Solicitor will work with

1 Council on writing the ordinance and will send
2 out a draft for conversation and any changes
3 prior to introduction. And I believe this is
4 best practice. But this did not occur in this
5 case.

6 I was not given the same courtesy
7 that I know I've previously given my own
8 colleagues. And if you wondered why I was
9 absent from the press conference yesterday
10 being given notice the night before, it doesn't
11 really allow me to change my work and patient
12 schedule to be there.

13 And so I have an issue with how this
14 process was handled in the first place. And I
15 hope that my colleagues will include me in
16 future conversations about legislation
17 specifically coming from Council out of basic
18 respect and even if they have no care for my
19 opinion or when they already have the votes.

20 Secondly, while I appreciate
21 Councilman Flynn's perspective as someone in
22 recovery and his intentions and spearheading
23 this ordinance, I have many questions that have
24 come up as I have been doing my own research.

25 I understand that kratom is not well

1 regulated and synthetic versions have an
2 increase potency, dependency and more of a
3 potential for harm, some of which has been
4 discussed for tonight. No other municipalities
5 have banned it within our state to date.

6 And other states do have bans.
7 There are some out there. But it's mostly for
8 synthetic versions of it. As stated early in
9 public comment, legislation regarding kratom
10 has been introduced within the PA State
11 Legislature between then end of 2025 and now,
12 including SB 233, HB 2058, and SB 899.

13 These pieces of legislation ban
14 unsafe kratom products derived from synthetics
15 prohibiting sales to those under age 21 and
16 giving enforcement powers to the Department of
17 Health. This legislation being presented here
18 tonight appears to be more of a general ban.

19 The many people who have contacted
20 us over the last day or so and who have spoken
21 here tonight, do not seem opposed to the
22 restrictions including -- included in the
23 proposed the state legislation. They are not
24 saying don't pass this at all.

25 I think that we could consider

1 amendments to it that mirror or match what's
2 been proposed within the state legislation as
3 well as, you know, perhaps motivating the state
4 to act on it sooner. And I'd also like to put
5 out that most people seem to be asking that
6 natural leaf not be banned.

7 But they're not opposed to the 7-OH
8 being banned and taken out of stores. I would
9 like to ask my colleagues who have developed
10 the legislation to respond to the following
11 questions. Normally if this was something that
12 came from the administration we would forward
13 those questions to them.

14 But since my colleagues are sitting
15 here next to me I would like to know if they
16 have responses to what research was done on the
17 matter, was there legislation that this
18 ordinance is based on, how will this be
19 regulated and enforced practically?

20 That's probably one of my largest
21 concerns. How will testing take place, was
22 this ban and enforcement discussed with our
23 Scranton Police Department? And I also want to
24 know a little bit more about how the
25 consequences will work the way it's written

1 says that someone will face a fine of the \$300
2 or be jailed up to 90 days.

3 So does that mean the first offense
4 will only be a fine and then the following
5 offenses would result in jail time? I was just
6 a little unclear on that. And then I'd also
7 like to know if there's an urgent element to
8 this legislation because of how quickly it came
9 to me and to the public.

10 It seems that if this legislation is
11 important that it would be more thought out and
12 that it would also be made to be enforceable,
13 rather than a statement piece. As it is
14 written now and with a lack of communication
15 with the administration who would take
16 responsibility of enforcing it, I don't see how
17 it could be well implemented and effective.

18 I still want to restate that I don't
19 disagree with banning synthetic kratom and
20 keeping the people in Scranton safe from
21 harmful substances. We just need to be more
22 thoughtful in this legislation and how it
23 should be carried out.

24 And that's all that I have for
25 comments tonight. But I do plan on once this

1 piece is introduced then making a motion to
2 table it for further discussion and potential
3 amendments. Thank you.

4 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
5 Mr. Sean McAndrew, do you have any motions or
6 comments?

7 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yeah, sure, I'll
8 speak on the kratom in Fifth Order when it
9 comes up to discuss. Tonight we're just
10 introducing it.

11 So other topics that I would like to
12 discuss, for the sign, I believe, on South
13 Irving for Mrs. O'Malley who came and spoke,
14 can we just have DPW or Scranton Police go down
15 that street and if -- let us know what signs
16 are city signs.

17 And if there's anything that is
18 illegal there, can we take it out, like, can we
19 just have them go through and make sure that
20 everything's that there should be there and a
21 city sign is legal. And if anything else
22 isn't, get it out of there.

23 MR. VOLDENBERG: It's a single sign.
24 I'll have them change it.

25 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Okay.

1 MR. VOLDENBERG: The one sign at the
2 end of the block.

3 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: So there is one
4 sign that is not legal.

5 MR. VOLDENBERG: Just one sign is in
6 question.

7 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Okay, well, then
8 I think they need to look at that and make sure
9 everything is fair and everything there is a
10 legal sign.

11 Next, there are -- Mr. Gilbride, I
12 know we -- last week regarding the decision for
13 us to tear down the building next door going
14 against HARB on that and reversing their
15 decision.

16 The Mayor never signed the document.
17 It was the first document in two years since
18 you've been here that the Mayor did not sign
19 off on. I asked you to ask the legal team to
20 get that in writing why was it not signed, what
21 was the reason. Did we ever get a response to
22 that?

23 ATTY. GILBRIDE: No, sir. As you're
24 aware, I e-mailed that very night of the
25 meeting and I have not received a response as

1 of today.

2 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Okay. Can we
3 follow up and continue to ask until we get an
4 answer?

5 ATTY. GILBRIDE: Yes, sir.

6 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: I appreciate
7 that. And then finally, Mr. Voldenberg, I have
8 a few properties that I'll be sending over to
9 the Licensing and Code to check on. One will
10 be on Prospect Ave. I don't want to put the
11 address here. But I'll e-mail everything over
12 to you.

13 MR. VOLDENBERG: Great. I'll take
14 care of them.

15 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: All right.
16 That's all I have for now, so thank you.

17 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Mr. Mark
18 McAndrew, do you have any motions or comments?

19 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yeah, I have a
20 few. So I'm going to first report out
21 inquiries that I made over the past couple
22 weeks that I got responses from administration.

23 So the first one was about the ghost
24 poles or the double poles that are throughout
25 the city and, you know, waiting -- pending

1 legislation to address these issues from state
2 and I'm hopeful.

3 But I asked what, you know, we could
4 do as a city because it's a public safety
5 issue, especially the one that, you know, I had
6 the picture of that was horrendous. It's still
7 not taken down, by the way. Still waiting on
8 the power company.

9 So do we communicate my question was
10 with PPL regarding increasing number of double
11 poles or the ghost pole -- an old pole that
12 remains. The project management office and the
13 Department of DPW coordinate with pole owners
14 when any public safety concerns are reported.

15 The city holds no determining
16 authority on location and reasonableness of
17 pole placement as long as it's within the
18 right-of-way. The city only has authority when
19 there is a risk of public safety or city
20 assets, such as, roads and sidewalks.

21 So we just need to keep our eyes on
22 them. I'm very hopeful for the legislation
23 that's going to resolve all of these issues and
24 force the utility companies to take ownership
25 of their garbage -- the poles that remain and

1 get rid of them before they become a safety
2 issue. So I'm glad to see that happen. We'll
3 stay on that. We'll keep our eyes on that.

4 Also last week, you know, I get a
5 couple complaints. We get them every year
6 regarding, especially now with the warmer
7 weather an uptick in illegal ATVs driving
8 around the city and especially them electric
9 bikes that's bob in and out of traffic that
10 it's very dangerous I encounter almost daily.

11 I asked if there is any new strategy
12 with the police department. We know we can't
13 chase them. We don't want to get anybody hurt.
14 We understand that. But we were told
15 previously that with the old command center
16 they could radio or go from camera to camera to
17 camera.

18 We're putting a new one next door.
19 It's going to cost a fortune. I hope that's
20 part of the process. But the response I got
21 was, we will continue to work with the public
22 to take appropriate measures to enforce the
23 applicable laws.

24 Maybe we have to tighten up the
25 ordinance again because it was kind of weak

1 when we did it a couple years ago. So we'll
2 keep our eye on that. So a business owner
3 asked me a question because there's some
4 confusion with the 2019 ordinance which
5 prohibits time related signage in the city.

6 Right, it was changed then but
7 really never enforced meaning, you know, you
8 could have a sign that says parking only two
9 hours. All right. There might be some that
10 exist but they shouldn't at this point.

11 Maybe they didn't get caught up
12 with it. A couple business owners did. Whoa,
13 I didn't know anything about it. It's happened
14 to me. And so the one owner asked me okay,
15 okay, if that's not applicable anymore, there
16 are loading zones that are going up in the city
17 that have to remain open. All right.

18 So -- so I asked last week
19 administration the process including forms,
20 applications related to parking contacts
21 regarding parking signs for businesses, meaning
22 the loading zone. So I'm sure this gentleman's
23 watching, I'm going to read the response I got.

24 As part of the city's negotiations
25 in resulting amendment with the parking lease

1 concession agreement which was recently, Grow
2 America, it was agreed that all signs
3 regulating on-street parking that were not
4 lawful -- lawfully authorized by the Mayor and
5 City Council will be removed.

6 And instead -- not meaning lawful
7 meaning not referring to the 2019 ordinance.
8 That's what I'm taking it. Instead, a loading
9 zone will be established on each block in the
10 downtown for shared use by businesses.

11 So this gentleman asked me how to
12 do it. So if a business or anybody else who's
13 watching that might want this done completed
14 for them, the business wishes to request a
15 loading zone on a block in which one does not
16 already exist, they may contact Car Park or the
17 city via the Law Department.

18 All right, so I will share this with
19 the resident that reached out to me, but I'm
20 sure he's watching. All right. Also, you
21 know, we had some, of course, we dealt with
22 some -- some horrible, horrible weather this
23 year and the homeless were greatly affected.
24 And we talk about the roads.

25 But guess what, the homeless were

1 more affected, I believe. And we had a couple
2 people speak and advocate and an actual
3 homeless person and wanting a seat at the table
4 for our homeless task force that or homeless
5 shelter task force or that, you know, doesn't
6 really meet, doesn't keep good minutes, doesn't
7 really report out to us.

8 And I know there's a meeting coming
9 up in April. I'm just not sure when because
10 we're not really briefed. But I asked before
11 and these two ladies wanted to be -- want a
12 seat at the table. They bring great value and
13 perspective, one being an unfortunate person
14 that's a homeless; and another being an
15 advocate across from one of our shelters that
16 sees, you know, real time on the struggles,
17 helps out, goes over and volunteers, talks to
18 people, provides, you know, food and all kinds
19 of really nice things that she does out of her
20 own pocket.

21 The answer we got finally is the
22 city will review this request. So that means
23 it's probably not going to happen. So could
24 you follow up and say did they review this
25 request yet between when I got -- a month ago

1 when I got this response and find out -- I need
2 to know probably for next meeting if we missed
3 the homeless -- I know you're on the task
4 force. Is it this week? Is it next week? Is
5 it --

6 DR. ROTHCHILD: No, it's towards the
7 end of April, I believe the 29th.

8 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Okay.

9 DR. ROTHCHILD: And I have discussed
10 this with the administration. And it's --
11 we're going to make sure to discuss it at the
12 next task force meeting, figure out if we need
13 to have, like, another -- a committee under the
14 task force that could include residents of the
15 community. So that will be an important
16 discussion to have and something --

17 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Sounds good.

18 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yep.

19 MR. MARK MCANDREW: All right. So
20 speaking of the loading -- the loading zones
21 parking spots in the city or loading zones
22 spots in the city, I know I requested one on
23 behalf of a business owner a while back. It
24 was installed.

25 But guess what, so sometimes we have

1 to dig a little deeper for safety sake. A
2 resident -- a very concerned resident is not
3 against this parking loading zone. But how
4 it's located on 417 Lackawanna, it makes it
5 difficult for their workers and clients to exit
6 our parking area due to cars not paying
7 attention to this loading zone, right, because
8 it's new. I get that.

9 I was wondering if they could have
10 lines painted. I guess this gentleman --
11 business owner reached out to, you know, our
12 Grow America, the parking and they said there's
13 another one being done down the block. But
14 they didn't say anything about either painting
15 lines or having a little better signage.

16 So can you share that concern with
17 them and see if they could take care of that
18 for the residents?

19 MR. VOLDENBERG: Yeah, I will. I'll
20 share it with DPW in the morning.

21 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yeah, I don't
22 know. Do we need -- I don't think we need
23 approval from the parking lease -- you know,
24 that we lease to to do that, just make it a
25 little safer, that's all, nothing wrong with

1 that.

2 So also -- what else do I have here?
3 So during caucus, you know, we talked a great
4 deal about, you know, the issues that were
5 incurred during the horrific winter, the worst
6 one we had in 30 years and, you know, I think
7 DPW did a great job, by the way.

8 But -- but I did mention during
9 caucus and I want to make a motion. I don't
10 want to make a motion to vote on now to make it
11 an ordinance, but I want to make a motion to
12 explore or actually create or present
13 administration with a request, you know,
14 hopefully I get the support of my colleagues
15 and we vote on it.

16 And the request is, whenever there's
17 an emergency declaration, right, I'm here long
18 enough where there was a few. We had Covid.
19 We had all kinds of craziness, right, and this
20 weather event was an emergency declaration
21 definitely, right, state of emergency for the
22 whole state.

23 But it took us months to get
24 everybody at the table here and tell us what
25 happened, right. The paper didn't do us

1 justice, you know, printing that the Mayor and
2 her administration blamed the poor drivers,
3 period. Right, we didn't get the information.
4 We don't know what happened. We don't know how
5 many hours they worked, how many hours they're
6 supposed to work.

7 We didn't know in the new contract
8 versus the old contract they're going to be
9 working less or working more. We didn't know
10 that the people that stayed home -- we did find
11 out -- that stayed home that called off weren't
12 drivers, right? They're not picking up
13 garbage.

14 They're not driving a truck. So
15 what could they do during the snowstorm,
16 nothing. So they take advantage of taking that
17 time off. And that's fine. Or some took time
18 off to rest to go out and drive for the 18
19 hours.

20 So we could have avoided all of this
21 controversy because, you know, we all want to
22 do a great thing for the city. You guys do a
23 great job for the city. We're here because we
24 care. So we need to work together. And I
25 think, you know, the powers that be that claim,

1 no, we're transparent. We're always
2 transparent.

3 Well, you weren't because we had to
4 bring you in here and tell us what happened.
5 That's not transparency when you have to bring
6 them in weeks or months later, right, and beg
7 for information on what happened. So with that
8 said, I would like, like I said, make a motion
9 right now because we're in Fifth Order.

10 It's motions that we -- that we task
11 our Solicitor to come up with a response that
12 or a requirement by Council when the Mayor
13 declares a state of emergency, right, or
14 declaration, an emergency declaration.

15 What we want in a timely fashion
16 because it costs money usually. Look at all
17 the overtime, right. We had asked. No, we
18 still don't know how much it cost -- a synopsis
19 of what happened after the event or what
20 happened during the event, right, how much did
21 it cost, what's the impact on the residents?
22 They're flipping the bill, right?

23 What was determined, what happened
24 moving forward, what should we do, what didn't
25 we, you know, part of a, like, reflection

1 synopsis of the event and moving forward, you
2 know, so we're better prepared and the
3 residents and taxpayers are formed what
4 actually occurred during that period and not
5 wait and have all of this. All right?

6 So I want it for every -- or any
7 declaration emergency, an action plan, a formal
8 action plan, a response. We could fool around
9 with the language of what we're going to call
10 this report or plan, but I think it's a
11 courtesy to us so we're in the loop.

12 I think it's a courtesy to the
13 residents. I think they deserve it. All
14 right. I made a motion, guys.

15 MR. SCHUSTER: We have a motion. Do
16 we have second?

17 MR. FLYNN: Second.

18 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?
19 On the question, I do like this idea. What I
20 tried to did with the declaration of emergency
21 was I asked for what those bills were and what
22 we were getting. We got that, I don't know,
23 maybe last week what we had spent during that
24 emergency situation.

25 But Council in the end is inevitably

1 voting to approve that funding being spent.
2 And at this point in time we read in caucus it
3 was \$330,000 in just snow removal plus some
4 additional fees. It was a lot of money during
5 that. So I would approve of this. Or I would
6 support this. Can we have a roll call?

7 MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

8 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

9 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Sean McAndrew.

10 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yes.

11 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Mark McAndrew.

12 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yes.

13 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Flynn.

14 MR. FLYNN: Yes.

15 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

16 MR. SCHUSTER: Yes. Thank you.

17 Anything else, Mr. McAndrew.

18 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yeah, I have one
19 more thing. So all right, we had a pave cut
20 company in here. We had utility companies in
21 here telling us, you know, they provide the
22 best service ever in regards to paving.

23 And then we -- it's no secret that
24 the paving list hit the papers today, right,
25 the paving list for this year. And hopefully

1 some of the streets that didn't get on the
2 paving list are going to be on fall one, right.

3 But what we really didn't discuss is,
4 so all of these utility companies that make
5 these pave cuts that promise they're going
6 to -- after, you know, we got the lay of the
7 land, after 30 days, 60 days, 90 when it's full
8 restoration or when the project's done, ba, ba,
9 ba, ba, ba.

10 But I also do remember and it's
11 in -- it's in the ordinance and it's always
12 been an agreement that curb to curb, right, so
13 what that means is when they're done with
14 everything, they are supposed to pave curb to
15 curb for the most part depending on the
16 project.

17 And also depending on the size of
18 the project, they might have to pave the whole
19 street, right, or should or have in the past.
20 None of that was discussed this year, right, so
21 with that said, you know what list I want? I
22 want the list from the utility companies, Mr.
23 Voldenberg, if you'd please reach out to
24 administration -- the list that the utility
25 companies are going to pave curb to curb, what

1 parts of the city, what streets are going to
2 pave if they're paving whole streets curb to
3 curb because there might be people sitting home
4 right now reading that list that just came out
5 in the paper going, are you kidding me? My
6 street's not going to be paved? It's one of
7 the worst in the city.

8 It's not on that list maybe because
9 they are working on it. Maybe -- I'm giving
10 them the benefit of the doubt that it's going
11 to be paved by the utility company, I don't
12 know, maybe in a month, maybe before the
13 winter.

14 So if we have that information, we
15 could share it with the residents that there
16 are still going to come here and say my
17 street's a mess. And it's not on paving list.
18 Like, give me a break. That's what they're
19 going to say to us.

20 We live it here. So could you
21 please see if they could compile a list of the
22 streets that the utilities -- first of all, are
23 contractually responsible to pave curb to curb
24 and which ones are going to be totally paved.

25 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will, sir.

1 MR. MARK MCANDREW: All right.

2 Thank you. And guess what, that's all I have.

3 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you. Mr.

4 Flynn, do you have any motions or comments at
5 this time?

6 MR. FLYNN: Yeah, so I'll talk about
7 the proposed kratom ordinances. I want to
8 begin thanking some of the individuals advocate
9 for coming out tonight. I want to acknowledge
10 that there are people that feel strongly that
11 kratom should remain available.

12 Over the past 24 hours I have heard
13 from individuals all over the county. Some
14 individuals that state that it helps them with
15 pain management, dealing with some behavioral
16 health issues, such as, trauma, PTSD,
17 depression among others.

18 While others say it has played a
19 role in their recovery. I want to be clear
20 that I hear these concerns. And I respect that
21 people come to this issue from different
22 perspectives. The reality we are facing at the
23 local level here in Scranton is that there is
24 currently no meaningful regulatory framework
25 governing these products.

1 Kratom is being sold in gas
2 stations, smoke shops, convenient stores in a
3 wide range of forms, powders, capsules,
4 extracts, increasingly potent -- potent
5 concentrates.

6 There are no consistent
7 manufacturing standards, no uniform labeling
8 requirements, and no clear dosing guidance.
9 The main compound that has raised growing
10 concern is 7-OH. This compound exists
11 naturally in the kratom leaf in small amounts.

12 What we are increasingly seeing on
13 the market today are products where this
14 compound is concentrated or enhanced
15 dramatically increasing potency. From a
16 municipal standpoint, we simply do not have the
17 authority to regulate substances like this in a
18 responsible way.

19 Scranton cannot set dose limits on
20 compounds like 7-OH. We cannot mandate
21 laboratory testing standards. And we cannot
22 establish clear packaging and labeling
23 requirements that are so badly needed in this
24 market.

25 Until those standard exist,

1 municipalities like Scranton are left with
2 limited tools to address products that are
3 widely available, increasingly potent, and
4 completely unregulated.

5 We could put a ban in place or we
6 can allow 7-OH sales and things like 7-OH to
7 continue to be like the wild west in our city.
8 I also want to address something that has been
9 quite a -- that has had a lot of
10 misinformation.

11 This ordinance is only civil in
12 nature, not criminal. It regulates the
13 commercial sale of these products within the
14 city. Any penalties are strictly civil
15 similar to other local regulatory actions.
16 This ordinance does not create criminal charges
17 for individuals.

18 Regardless of what national trade
19 groups may be publicly suggesting, this is not
20 and has never been about criminalizing
21 individuals. It is about regulating the sale
22 of a product that operates in a regulatory gray
23 area.

24 This ordinance is not about
25 dismissing the experiences of individuals who

1 believe kratom has helped them. It is not been
2 stigmatizing anyone struggling with addiction
3 or recovery.

4 It is about protecting our residents
5 in the City of Scranton until there's a clear
6 federal regulatory structure. And I'd also
7 understand that bills have been introduced in
8 the Pennsylvania State House and Senate.

9 I also understand that those bills
10 have been introduced in the State of
11 Pennsylvania in this Commonwealth since at
12 least 2019. And every two years if a bill
13 isn't passed into law in both chambers and
14 signed by the Governor within that legislative
15 session, the whole entire process starts over
16 again.

17 So what has happened every couple
18 years in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is
19 there are lobbies out there for the kratom
20 industry that have beat back these bills and
21 some of these regulatory frameworks that can
22 happen in Pennsylvania around 7-OH, some of the
23 sales to minors, etc., etc.

24 And at the end of session which will
25 be ending again in December of this year, they

1 never pass both chambers of the legislature
2 and that entire process has to begin again.
3 While I would truly hope that this could be
4 regulated and have more teeth than what we can
5 do in Scranton from a federal or a state level,
6 I am not willing to sit around and wait for
7 those levels of government to act when for so
8 long they have not.

9 When for so long these highly
10 concentrated, highly addictive substance and
11 makeup have hit our stores and impacted our
12 residents within the city, I will not wait for
13 them to act. I will put the health and the
14 welfare and the safety of the citizens of
15 Scranton first and foremost in my mind.

16 And I appreciate, once again,
17 everyone who came out to advocate for the pure
18 leaf kratom. And I understand and I would love
19 to have conversations with many of you. But as
20 it stands right now as a municipality and as
21 the City of Scranton, there's no way to
22 differentiate the two in the form of dosage,
23 marketing, regulations or anything like that.

24 So I appreciate everyone's time
25 coming out. And that's all I have for tonight.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

3 Mr. Flynn. I do have a couple comments
4 tonight. I'll address the kratom when we
5 introduce the legislation. Some follow up from
6 last week, Mr. Voldenberg, did we hear anything
7 back on the Center City baseball field on I
8 believe Wood Street where they were bringing
9 some of the Christmas trees --

10 MR. VOLDENBERG: No word as yet.
11 I'll follow up.

12 MR. SCHUSTER: All right. Thank
13 you.

14 ATTY. GILBRIDE: Excuse me, Mr.
15 President, is that with regard to the placement
16 of the trees?

17 MR. SCHUSTER: Correct.

18 ATTY. GILBRIDE: I was told today
19 that that has been corrected.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: Okay.

21 ATTY. GILBRIDE: That they've been
22 taken care of.

23 MR. SCHUSTER: Okay. Thank you.
24 Did we get any followup from the questions we
25 asked Pennoni when they were in for pave cuts?

1 No, okay. We heard in public comment tonight
2 that there -- there's a plan to make some of
3 the streets one way in Tripp Park and place a
4 welcome to West Scranton sign on I believe 915
5 Euclid Avenue. Can we just inquire to see if
6 that's the case?

7 MR. VOLDENBERG: I will, sir.

8 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
9 We discussed South Irving Avenue where the City
10 Engineer is going to review that. We did ask
11 about -- last week I did ask about a copy of
12 the DEP plan for Meadow Brook Project and
13 administration said that DEP has requested that
14 we do not give the plans out.

15 But they're happy to meet if anyone
16 would like to discuss the plan. So we might
17 arrange something soon. I did inquire about
18 the status of pools and parks for the
19 summertime as the summer is getting close as
20 we're getting into spring.

21 So the response that I got was that
22 we generally open one pool and one splash pad
23 for Memorial Day. They get them open for the
24 weekend so people could go out for the
25 holidays. The pool openings are strategically

1 timed to coincide with the end of the public
2 school year.

3 And the Scranton School District is
4 currently scheduled high school graduation for
5 Tuesday, June 9th, 2026. So pools will likely
6 to open that week. After opening day, pools
7 remain open daily from noon to 6 p.m. through
8 Labor Day.

9 Weston Field's indoor pool is open
10 year round. Last year Connell Park, Weston
11 Park and Weston Field pools were open as well
12 as the Novembrino Splash Pad. And this year
13 Nay Aug is going to be added as well the
14 Capouse Avenue splash pad.

15 So with the pools and splash pads,
16 also the athletic courts at Nay Aug will be
17 open from mid to late May. And they're
18 awaiting court sealing depending on the
19 weather. So they're looking for late May for
20 the openings of those courts.

21 Grace Street's going to see some
22 playground renovation and Connell Park should
23 be starting in May. That is all I have for
24 tonight.

25 MR. VOLDENBERG: 5-B. FOR

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

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

21 MR. FLYNN: So moved.

22 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Second.

23 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?

24 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yeah, on the
25 question, I know there was some question about

1 the timing of this coming over. I also did get
2 it on Sunday, had time to read it over Monday
3 and today as well.

4 It's not too much different
5 information we get from the administration on
6 timing. I do also want to remember -- remind
7 everybody this is just introducing it. There
8 will be multiple readings before it's, you
9 know, approved or denied.

10 So knowing Pat and knowing DA
11 Gallagher, they would never put something in
12 front of us if they didn't do their research
13 and felt strong about it. And Mr. Gilbride as
14 well I believe helped out.

15 When I think about rushed issue, I
16 don't feel like this is a rushed ordinance.
17 When I think about things that were rushed by
18 administration it's the Fidelity building being
19 purchased and Geisinger getting their zoning
20 changed before a new Council could come on
21 because they might have a different decision.

22 That is something I believe is
23 rushed. This is just standard protocol. It's
24 being presented in front of us to introduce.
25 And we have time to review it, make -- possibly

1 make changes, to table it, whatever. But I do
2 not feel like this was rushed.

3 And appreciate the hard work
4 Attorney Gilbride, DA Gallagher and my Council
5 member Flynn for all their hard work on this.
6 And to just to say that they definitely did
7 their research on this and they feel strongly
8 about it. It would not be in front of us if it
9 wasn't. So thank you.

10 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
11 On the question?

12 MR. FLYNN: On the question quickly,
13 I appreciate some of the concerns from
14 Councilwoman Rothchild. And to be fair,
15 this -- this was something that I had been
16 researching for months and months and months
17 and months and working with Attorney Gilbride
18 on it.

19 And at the end of last week I
20 brought it to Council President Schuster on
21 Friday as I should have. I have been working
22 with the District Attorney, members of the
23 recovery community, members in emergency
24 departments throughout the City of Scranton.

25 And I put in quite a bit of time and

1 effort into -- into the research and getting to
2 know more about everything that had to do with
3 this. So I will say that I did my due
4 diligence on this. I apologize if it didn't
5 come to you soon enough. But I did do my due
6 diligence on it.

7 As far as your question around
8 enforcement, I would hope just like any other
9 ordinance that's passed in the City of Scranton
10 that the police department when needed would
11 enforce that ordinance, you know, whatever
12 department it would fall under would enforce it
13 just like any piece of legislation that is
14 passed into law in the City of Scranton.

15 So I just want to address those
16 things very quickly. And that's all I have.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you.

19 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Go ahead.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: Go ahead, Mr.
21 McAndrew.

22 MR. MARK MCANDREW: All right. So I
23 got -- I pretty much got the notice of the
24 press release, you know, the day before. Prior
25 ordinances that come from administration, I get

1 invited to the press release either an hour
2 after it or 10 minutes before while I'm at work
3 and more than once where some of my colleagues
4 were in the know ahead of time and were there.

5 So I'm not going to do the tit for
6 tat for that kind of thing. But I know this
7 was a pet project for you and even before you
8 ran that I was made aware of. I know you
9 worked with, like I said, DA -- not like I
10 said, like the rest of them have said, you know
11 DA Gallagher, our Solicitor.

12 I'm not going to question any of you
13 guys. That's your area of expertise, not mine.
14 I have different areas. I knew once crafted
15 under the, you know, the collaboration of you
16 three, it would be a solid piece of legislation
17 compared to some we get from administration,
18 last minute, rush jobs that are intentional as
19 Councilman McAndrew noted.

20 Last December we got more stuff
21 shoved down our throats last December with an
22 outgoing Council than ever. So, like I said,
23 I'm happy. I have no complaints about how I
24 got it. I didn't get it fast enough or short
25 enough. It's solid and I'm going to vote to

1 introduce it and vote it each week until it's
2 an ordinance. Thank you.

3 MR. SCHUSTER: Thank you very much.
4 I'd like to echo some of same sentiment. This
5 is Fifth Order tonight. We're introducing
6 between Fifth Order and final passage, we'll
7 have time to answer those questions. I do
8 appreciate those questions as well as we vet
9 this legislation as it moves forward. We're
10 going to get those answers.

11 Thanking several people,
12 Mr. Gilbride, thank you very much for your
13 hard work on this. Mr. Flynn, thank you for
14 your forward thinking. Different areas of the
15 public came together to craft this ordinance.
16 You had members of law enforcement.

17 Myself, I'm involved with school-age
18 children so I'm seeing some of this come into
19 the school and permeate the schools. And it's
20 easily accessible to minors. The piece of
21 legislation I feel is a proactive step from
22 Council to protect the public health in our
23 community.

24 We're restricting access to harmful
25 products in our city. And these are products

1 that could be easily accessible to minors. I
2 also believe that positives come out of this
3 and inevitably, we may be saving lives. And I
4 think we are going to be saving lives.

5 So a handful of states and
6 municipalities have taken similar measures.
7 And I hope that some of our neighboring
8 communities also take note of legislation and
9 pass similar ordinances. And I will be
10 supporting this tonight. Anyone else on the
11 question?

12 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes, on the
13 question, I won't go, you know, as much into it
14 as I did earlier. But I think it would be
15 irresponsible to pass this legislation as is.
16 And I do appreciate it being put together, but
17 I still don't feel like it's fully vetted. I
18 still don't quite understand why the county DA
19 was consulted and it was discussed with him but
20 not with our Scranton Police Department.

21 That -- especially if they're the
22 ones that would potentially have to issue the
23 fines. The DA would -- that would come into
24 place after the fine was issued and then, you
25 know, from that standpoint from a judicial

1 standpoint.

2 So I just -- yeah, still unclear on
3 that and on other aspects of it. And I do feel
4 like it's an overreach to completely ban the
5 substance. I would like the opportunity for us
6 to look even more into it to hear out the
7 public. So I will still be making a motion to
8 table items 5-B and 5-C tonight.

9 MR. SCHUSTER: There's a motion --
10 motion to table. Do we have a second? We do
11 not have a second. Anyone else on the
12 question?

13 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yeah,
14 Mr. Gilbride, just to confirm, the Chief law
15 enforcement agent is the DA, correct, for all
16 municipalities that fall under Lackawanna
17 County?

18 ATTY. GILBRIDE: On the state level.

19 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Okay. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. SCHUSTER: Okay. Anyone else on
22 the question? All those in favor of
23 introduction signify by stating aye.

24 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Aye.

25 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Aye.

1 MR. FLYNN: Aye.

2 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye. Opposed?

3 DR. ROTHCHILD: No.

4 MR. SCHUSTER: The ayes have it and
5 so moved.

6 MR. VOLDENBERG: 5-C. FOR
7 INTRODUCTION - AN ORDINANCE - REGULATING THE
8 SALE AND/OR DISTRIBUTION OF KRATOM (MITRAGYNA
9 SPECIOSA) AND ITS ACTIVE RELATED ALKALOID,
10 INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO MITRAGYNINE AND
11 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE (7-OH), AND/OR ANY
12 SYNTHETIC, SEMI- SYNTHETIC, CONCENTRATED, OR
13 CHEMICALLY MODIFIED DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR
14 HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR INGESTION; PROHIBITING THE
15 POSSESSION OF KRATOM (MITRAGYNA SPECIOSA) AND
16 ITS ACTIVE RELATED ALKALOID, INCLUDING BUT NOT
17 LIMITED TO MITRAGYNINE AND 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE
18 (7-OH), AND/OR ANY SYNTHETIC, SEMI-SYNTHETIC,
19 CONCENTRATED, OR CHEMICALLY MODIFIED
20 DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR
21 INGESTION; AND, PROHIBITING THE MANUFACTURE AND
22 PRODUCTION OF KRATOM (MITRAGYNA SPECIOSA) AND
23 ITS ACTIVE RELATED ALKALOID, INCLUDING BUT NOT
24 LIMITED TO MITRAGYNINE AND 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE
25 (7-OH), AND/OR ANY SYNTHETIC, SEMI-SYNTHETIC,

1 CONCENTRATED, OR CHEMICALLY MODIFIED
2 DERIVATIVES THEREOF FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION OR
3 INGESTION.

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

7 MR. MARK MCANDREW: So moved.

8 MR. FLYNN: Second.

9 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question? All
10 those in favor of introduction signify by
11 saying aye.

12 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Aye.

13 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Aye.

14 MR. FLYNN: Aye.

15 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye. Opposed?

16 DR. ROTHCHILD: No.

17 MR. SCHUSTER: The ayes have it and
18 so moved.

19 MR. VOLDENBERG: 5-D. FOR
20 INTRODUCTION - A RESOLUTION - AUTHORIZING THE
21 MAYOR AND OTHER APPROPRIATE CITY OFFICIALS TO
22 EXECUTE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SOEL
23 INSTITUTE, INC. TO PERFORM WATER SAFETY AND
24 SWIM INSTRUCTION PARTNERSHIP.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: At this time I'll

1 entertain a motion that Item 5-D be introduced
2 into its proper committee.

3 MR. MARK MCANDREW: So moved.

4 MR. FLYNN: Second.

5 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question? All
6 those in favor of introduction signify by
7 stating aye.

8 DR. ROTHCHILD: Aye.

9 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Aye.

10 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Aye.

11 MR. FLYNN: Aye.

12 MR. SCHUSTER: Aye. Opposed? The
13 ayes it and so moved.

14 MR. VOLDENBERG: SIXTH ORDER. No
15 business at this time.

16 SEVENTH ORDER. 7-A. FOR
17 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE - FOR
18 ADOPTION - FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 9, 2026 -
19 AMENDING FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 102, 2025, AN
20 ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED "APPROPRIATING
21 FUNDS FOR THE EXPENSES OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT
22 FOR THE PERIOD COMMENCING ON THE FIRST DAY OF
23 JANUARY, 2026 TO AND INCLUDING DECEMBER 31,
24 2026 BY THE ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL CITY
25 OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2026," (2026

1 OPERATING BUDGET) BY TRANSFERRING THREE HUNDRED
2 TWENTY-FOUR THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED EIGHTY
3 DOLLARS AND ZERO CENTS (\$324,880.00) FROM THE
4 DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION, BUSINESS
5 ADMINISTRATION BUREAU OF OPER TSF-WORKERS'
6 COMPENSATION LINE ITEM ACCOUNT
7 100-44714-140-140-000000 TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
8 PUBLIC WORKS, HIGHWAYS BUREAU PROFESSIONAL
9 SERVICES LINE ITEM ACCOUNT
10 100-44201-180-183-000000 TO FUND UNFORESEEN
11 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES RELATED TO THE WINTER
12 STORM OCCURRING ON OR ABOUT JANUARY 25, 2026,
13 THAT WERE NOT IDENTIFIED DURING THE PREPARATION
14 OF THE 2026 OPERATING BUDGET.

15 MR. SCHUSTER: What is the
16 recommendation of the Chairperson for the
17 Committee on Finance?

18 DR. ROTHCHILD: As Chairperson for
19 the Committee on Finance, I recommend final
20 passage of Item 7-A.

21 MR. FLYNN: Second.

22 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?
23 Roll call, please.

24 MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

25 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

1 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Sean McAndrew.

2 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yes.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Mark McAndrew.

4 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yes.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Flynn.

6 MR. FLYNN: Yes.

7 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

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

10 MR. VOLDENBERG: 7-B. FOR
11 CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC
12 SAFETY - FOR ADOPTION - RESOLUTION NO. 39,
13 2026 - ADOPTION OF THE CITY OF SCRANTON'S
14 EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN ("EAP") MANUALS FOR SOUTH
15 SIDE FLOOD PROTECTION, PLOT FLOOD PROTECTION,
16 GREENRIDGE FLOOD PROTECTION AND THE ALBRIGHT
17 AVENUE FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECTS.

18 MR. SCHUSTER: What is the
19 recommendation of the Chairperson for Committee
20 on Public Safety?

21 MR. MARK MCANDREW: As Chairperson
22 for the Committee on Public Safety, I recommend
23 final passage of Item 7-B.

24 DR. ROTHCHILD: Second.

25 MR. SCHUSTER: On the question?

1 Roll call, please.

2 MS. CARRERA: Dr. Rothchild.

3 DR. ROTHCHILD: Yes.

4 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Sean McAndrew.

5 MR. SEAN MCANDREW: Yes.

6 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Mark McAndrew.

7 MR. MARK MCANDREW: Yes.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Flynn.

9 MR. FLYNN: Yes.

10 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Schuster.

11 MR. SCHUSTER: Yes. I hereby
12 declare Item 7-B legally and lawfully adopted.

13 MR. VOLDENBERG: EIGHTH ORDER. 8-A.
14 FILE OF THE COUNCIL NO. 7, 2026.

15 MR. SCHUSTER: This ordinance amends
16 provisions to the zoning ordinance for the City
17 of Scranton related to data centers.

18 MR. VOLDENBERG: 8-B. FILE OF THE
19 COUNCIL NO. 8, 2026.

20 MR. SCHUSTER: And this ordinance
21 amends provisions to the zoning ordinance for
22 the City of Scranton related to data centers.
23 These ordinances have been tabled until a
24 public hearing can be held at a later date.

25 If there's no other business, I'll

1 entertain a motion to adjourn.

2 MR. FLYNN: Motion to adjourn.

3 MR. SCHUSTER: This meeting is
4 adjourned. Have a 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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