

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022. Scheduled for 7:00 pm. In the City Council Chambers City Hall, Mount Vernon, New York.

*** Due to the ongoing pandemic this meeting was held in the council chambers, with virtual participation via ZOOM and CMVNY Facebook. The meeting was not closed to the public however, the maximum number of in-person occupant was limited ***

PRESENT: Danielle Browne Esq., Cathlin Gleason, Edward Poteat

ABSENT: Lisa A. Copeland

PRESIDING: Derrick Thompson, President

OTHERS: William H. Holmes, City Clerk, Tanesia M. Walters, Deputy City Clerk, Elias Gootzeit, Legislative Assistant and Brian G. Johnson, Corporation Counsel

Council President Derrick Thompson called the meeting to order and provided house-keeping rules, including in case of emergency. He then asked councilwoman Browne to lead the council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Council President then proceeded to the Public Speakers session of the evening (listed below as public comment).

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cynthia Crenshaw residing at 315 Mundy Lane, *appeared via zoom*. Ms. Crenshaw voiced her concerns about Mount Vernon not opting out of the State’s legalization and permission of cannabis dispensaries and consumption sites. She was especially concerned about a news that a cannabis dispensary site would be established at 4th. Avenue and Third street, which she stated is “right in the middle of the hood, in between three public schools”. She noted that according to *the Tracker*, 22 Westchester local government has opted-out, and in talking to a friend that resides in Tuckahoe she understands that the public had a meeting and voted to opt-out. Ms. Crenshaw asked why the residents of Mount Vernon were not allowed the same opportunity to meet and vote as the residents of Tuckahoe. She also states that the building that they are going to house the dispensary needs serious repairs, she asked that why the building department didn’t put a sign up that this building would be a cannabis dispensary.

Sabrina Powell residing at 20 E. First Street *appeared in person*. Ms. Powell welcomed the new council members and hopes to work closely with them soon. She informed the council body that she has worked in community outreach for over six years in the City of Mount Vernon and that outreach is her passion. Ms. Powell asked that her along with the council members begin a partnership that works together to conquer homelessness in Mount Vernon. In closing she

challenges the council body to put policy in place to help the homeless population. She advised that the residents and business owners that she conversed with does not want the city of Mount Vernon to be a dumping ground for the Westchester homeless population but wants to help the ones that are here.

Axel Eberman, residing at 526 East 5th Street, *appeared via zoom*. Mr. Eberman welcomed the new council members. He states that he has two appeals for the council. The first is please do not pass legislation that will not be followed up on- the leaf blower legislation passed but not enacted and it creates frustrations, because when laws are passed residents expects them to be implemented. The second is the civilian complaint review board-the City council legislated it and declared themselves as lead agencies and there has been no movement ever since. Mr. Eberman laments that it is extremely frustrating to residents when laws are passed and not implemented. He is appealing to the council to enforce the Charter. He advised that the council is the guardian of the Charter. If something is voted into law, it becomes a part of the charter. He states that if the law of the land is not being followed we will be deemed lawless, he gave an example of the budget being late again, and that it is a violation of the charter and it is up to the council to not let that slide. The council must enforce the charter for the budget to be on time.

Geoff Monroe residing at 145 South 4th Avenue, *appeared in person*. Mr. Monroe welcomed the new council. He quoted “If you trembled with indignation at every injustice then you are a comrade of mine.” It is a life lesson of his. It occurs to him that not everyone is a comrade and for him the qualifying line of whether someone is a comrade is if they are able to stand with indignation against injustice. He stressed that Mount Vernon is facing perilous times. He does not have any qualms about making enemies, he will call out wrong whenever he sees it and within whom he sees it and he prefers making friends. He holds people accountable for not heading justice. He stated contrary to popular belief on Facebook the council is not the people’s bosses, that they are the people’s servants. He would like the council body to head justice if not he will be calling them out.

The council body responded to the speakers.

Roll Call administered by Clerk William Holmes

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES AND ACTION THEREON

To the Council:

The **LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC WORKS** recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

- Int. No. 1 An Ordinance granting permission to the Mayor and two staffers to attend the Annual 90th Annual Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.
- Int. No. 2 An ordinance granting permission for a curb cut at 250 East Sanford Boulevard.
- Int. No. 3 An ordinance adopting a City Employee Laptop Policy.
- Int. No. 4 An amendment to 2022 City Council Rules of Order-passed 1/3/2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Danielle Browne, Esq., Chair

Cathlin Gleason, Co-Chair

Received, passed and filed.

Passed by the following vote:

Ayes: President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

Nays: None

Absent: councilwoman Copeland

To the Council:

The HUMAN RESOURCES Committee recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

- Int. No. 5 An ordinance authorizing the transfer of funds within the Department of Veteran Services. (\$9,500)
- Int. No. 6 An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board (WPWDW) (Gun Violence).
- Int. No. 7 An ordinance amending ordinance No. 14, adopted July 16, 2021, entitled “An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an Agreement with the Westchester – Putnam Work Development Board (WPWDB) Youth Employment Services Program.”

Int. No. 8 An ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with NYS Office of Children and Family Services. (\$35,000.00)

Int. No. 9 An ordinance granting permission to the Executive Director of the Youth Bureau and four staff members of the Youth Bureau's Strong Program to attend a conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Poteat, Co-chair

Lisa Copeland, Chair

Received, passed and filed.

Passed by the following vote:

Ayes: President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

Nays: None

Absent: councilwoman Copeland

To the Council:

The **PUBLIC SAFETY AND CODES** recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

Int. No. 10 An ordinance authorizing the Department of Buildings to increase permit fees.

Int. No. 11 A resolution of the City Council of the City of Mount Vernon authorizing the adoption of the 2022 Westchester County, NY Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

Int. No. 12 An ordinance authorizing communications specialist Rodney Thomas a one-year leave of absence without pay.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathlin Gleason, Chair

Danielle Browne, Esq., Co-Chair

Received, passed and filed.

Passed by the following vote:

Ayes: President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

Nays: None

Absent: councilwoman Copeland

To the Council:

The **FINANCE AND PLANNING** recommends for **ADOPTION** the following entitled legislation:

Int. No. 13 An ordinance creating the position of Director of Economic Development” through the Department of Planning and Community Development and authorizing the allocation of American rescue Plan Act funds.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward Poteat, Chair

Lisa Copeland, Co-Chair

Received, passed and filed.

Passed by the following vote:

Ayes: President Thompson, councilmembers; Browne, Gleason, Poteat

Nays: None

Absent: Councilwoman Copeland

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Tanesia M. Walters, *J.D., M.P.A*
Deputy City Clerk