

Minutes of the City Council Work Session of the Syracuse City Council, held on August 26, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., in a hybrid in-person/electronic format via Zoom, meeting ID 850 3705 2284, in-person in the City Council Conference Room at 1979 W. 1900 S., and streamed on the Syracuse City YouTube Channel in accordance with House Bill 5002, Open and Public Meetings Act Amendments, signed into law on June 25, 2020.

Present: Councilmembers: Jennifer Carver  
Brett Cragun  
Julie Robertson  
Jordan Savage (via Zoom)  
Paul Watson

Mayor Dave Maughan  
City Manager Brody Bovero  
Deputy City Recorder Marisa Graham

City Employees Present:  
Assistant City Manager Stephen Marshall  
City Attorney Colin Winchester  
Fire Chief Aaron Byington  
Police Chief Alex Davis  
Kresta Robinson Parks and Recreation Director  
Public Works Director Robert Whiteley  
Community and Economic Development Director Noah Steele  
Communications Specialist Kara Finley

The purpose of the Work Session was to receive public comments.; receive an annual update on UTOPIA Fiber project in Syracuse City; review recommendation from Planning Commission: application for zone change for property located at 2402 W. 2700 S., Agriculture (A-1) to Residential (R-2), applicant David Bennett; continued discussion and review of City land rental/lease policies and identification of properties potentially available for lease/rental to a commercial entity; continued discussion, request for consideration of lease of City property for a mobile food operation operated by Amanda and Michael Hildebrand; continued discussion and review of Syracuse Municipal Code 9.15 regarding building permit requirements; first reading of code enforcement policies related to business landscaping; discussion regarding Syracuse City employee recruitment and retention policy; annual fraud risk assessment and review; discussion regarding scheduling of Heritage Days; discuss policy manual amendments – observance of Juneteenth holiday; and discussion regarding proposed reprioritization of the 3000 West culinary and secondary waterline projects in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

### **Public comments**

There were no public comments.

### **Annual update on UTOPIA Fiber project in Syracuse City**

A staff memo from Administration explained that UTOPIA previously partnered with Syracuse City to bring high speed fiber to all areas of the City. This project ensured that all citizens had access to high-speed internet and increased the competition amongst internet providers and more choices for residents. A representative of UTOPIA will attend the meeting to provide a general status update and city specific information on subscribers and other project status information.

The Mayor invited Roger Timmerman with UTOPIA Fiber to provide a presentation about the status of UTOPIA Fiber in Syracuse City. Mr. Timmerman discussed changes that UTOPIA has made in the last few years pertaining to their network, statistics specific to Syracuse City, the economic benefit provided to Syracuse City, and an overview of the infrastructure revenue versus the City's contractual obligation. The Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Timmerman for his presentation.

### **Planning item D1: Recommendation from Planning Commission: application for zone change for property located at 2402 W. 2700 S., Agriculture (A-1) to Residential (R-2), applicant David Bennett**

A staff memo from Community and Economic Development (CED) Director explained that the City has received a rezone application from David Bennett for approximately .262 acres located approximately 2402 W. 2700 S. The request includes one parcel of land owned by Bennett, Vance T. & Kathryn S. - Trustees. The applicant provided the following reasons for the requested change: "Rezone to sell house and keep field." The property is located west of the West Davis Corridor overpass on 2700 S. The property includes a single-family home built in 2021. There was an older home on the property that was demolished in 2023 to make way for the West Davis Corridor. The south edge of the property has frontage on 2700 S. which is a City collector road. The east edge of the property is Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) owned land adjacent

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to the highway and the west is Sadie's Glen Planned Residential Development (PRD). Land use to the north of the property is also Sadie's Glen development and agriculture north of that, and south of the property is large lot single family residential, and south of that is the small/medium lot Shoreline master planned development. The current zoning on the parcel is agriculture (A-1). The A-1 zone's minimum lot size is 21,780 square feet. The parcel is 3.165 acres. Zoning to the east is A-1. Zoning to the west is Planned Residential Development (PRD). Zoning to the north is PRD. Zoning to the south is Residential (R-1), Residential Planned Community (RPC), and Residential (R-3). The requested zoning is R-2 for the property around the house only, which is approximately .262 acres or 11,412.72. Minimum lot size of the R-2 is 10,000 sf. Therefore, the requested lot would be compliant with the minimum lot size of the R-2 zone. The property is general planned for 'Low Density Residential'. General Plan to the north is medium density residential. General Plan to the south is low density residential and medium density residential. General Plan to the east is low density residential. General Plan to the west is medium density residential. The requested zoning of R-2 is consistent with the general plan designation of low density residential. The Planning Commission held the public hearing and forwarded a recommendation for approval on 8/19/25.

The Mayor and CED Director Steele reviewed the staff memo and stated Planning Commission is forwarding a recommendation for approval. There was a brief discussion between the Mayor and Council regarding the implications of the zone change and the Council showed support for moving the application to the next step. Mayor Maughan concluded the item will move forward to the September 9 business meeting for Council consideration and action.

**Planning item D2: Continued discussion/review of City Land Rental/Lease policies and identification of properties potentially available for lease/rental to a commercial entity**

A staff memo from the Community and Economic Development (CED) Director explained that the City leases and rents its land and property out for a variety of reasons. The City rents park pavilions, reservations can be made for rooms at the community center. Park fields are rented for sports. The City Hall Council Chambers are available for rent. The city rents a parking lot out to a snow cone shack. It has rented land to a firework stand. The city land and property are made available to the public as long as the proper agreements are made to ensure all issues are covered including liability, safety, and other practical concerns. The city can make agreements to lease or even sell land or property in a variety of ways. The lease transactions are mostly not profitable. The bottom line in determining its leasing policies is evaluating how the use of city land benefits or detracts from the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. There are two ordinances that could govern the lease of this city space depending on how council interprets the context of the proposal. The first would be ordinance 4.25.160 which requires concession people selling food, drinks, or other items in a park to have a special contract approved by the City. In the consolidated fee schedule, 'Park Land Rental (Concessionaire)' is listed at \$250 per month. Common practice is for the Parks and Recreation Director to approve or deny proposals for concessionaires in parks. It is recommended to update the consolidated fee schedule to at least \$1,000 per month. The second potential governing ordinance is 13.40.060. This ordinance is applicable for a business wanting to lease non-park and city land. In this scenario, a lease agreement with the terms and condition of the lease would be required to be presented in a public hearing. In considering leasing public land out to private business, the city should weigh the pros and cons of doing so. Pros include adding service or product availability to patrons of a city park such as a snow cone on a hot day, fostering small business that may very well grow to occupy a brick-and-mortar location within the city, generation of sales tax, and collecting additional revenue from less used portions of city land. Cons include wear and tear of city property, additional staff time to clean bathrooms, remove garbage, process lease payments, and create and execute legal agreements. Also, the space occupied by the business competes with parking needs of park goers and recreation league parking, potential unfair advantage to private land rental if city lease rates lag behind market rates, safety concerns about attracting pedestrian traffic to a parking lot where auto pedestrian accidents can occur, liability concerns, practical concerns related to power infrastructure with unsafe power cords crossing drive isles or sidewalks creating fire and tripping hazards, generator noise and air pollution, and lastly, access to restrooms for employees and patrons where city park bathrooms are seasonal and porta-potties are smelly and prone to vandalism. A detailed analysis is included in the packet.

The Mayor reviewed the staff memo and explained that Administration met with Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and CED staff regarding the management of renting out City land to commercial entities and it was determined that doing so would put an added strain on staff to manage the arrangements. The Mayor advised the Council not to consider making park and ride lots available for commercial leases at this time as the City does not currently own the park and ride lots.

Councilmember Carver stated after reviewing the information, she does not believe the City should rent or lease City land and expressed concern about the safety of doing so. Councilmembers Cragun and Robinson agreed.

Councilmember Watson stated he believes there are ways the City can accommodate renting out land to businesses, however the additional costs should be passed on to the businesses renting from the City. Councilmember Savage stated he agrees with Councilmember Watson and stated if the City is going to rent out land, any amount charged to the lessee would need to cover the cost of the service.

The Mayor concluded that there was not enough support from the Council for this item to move forward.

**Planning item D3: Continued discussion – request for consideration of lease of City property for a mobile food operation operated by Amanda and Michael Hildebrand**

A staff memo from the Community and Economic Development (CED) Director explained The City has been approached by Amanda and Michael Hildebrand, owners of Witches Brew Coffee Co. about leasing city owned property for a mobile food operation. See attached for their detailed proposal. In summary, they are requesting to park their enclosed trailer in the museum parking lot to sell coffee year-round. They would like to plug into power, but if not allowable, would run a generator. They would agree to pay monthly lease payments. In their proposal, there is a graphic showing their desired locations to park the trailer. Their desired locations would occupy about three parking stalls and prefer to park west of the museum building's entrance. Their proposed hours of operation would be weekdays 6 am to 4 pm, weekends 7 am to 1 pm. Also, there would be about an hour setup, and hour take down before and after those business hours. There are two ordinances that could potentially govern the lease of this city space depending on how council interprets the context of the proposal. The first would be ordinance 4.25.160 which requires concession people selling food, drinks, or other items in a park to have a special contract approved by the City. In the consolidated fee schedule, 'Park Land Rental (Concessionaire)' is listed at \$250 per month. Common practice is for the Parks and Recreation Director to approve or deny proposals for concessionaires in parks. In this case, since it was presented to the City Council, it could be approved by council instead of the director. The second potential governing ordinance is 13.40.060. This ordinance would be applicable if the Witches Brew proposal was considered to not be a concessionaire renting park land, but a business leasing non-park, city land. The museum parking lot is on the same parcel as Centennial Park, but the exact boundary between park and museum parking lot could be debated. In this scenario, a lease agreement with the terms and condition of the lease would be required to be presented in a public hearing. The applicant reports that the common industry standard lease rate is around \$750-900 per month.

The Mayor reviewed the staff memo and explained that this item will not move forward due to lack of support from the Council regarding City land lease and rentals. The Mayor explained that staff provided the applicants with private land lease options and recommended that staff continue to do so in the future.

**Planning item D4: Continued discussion and review of Syracuse Municipal Code 9.15 regarding building permit requirements**

A staff memo from the Community and Economic Development (CED) Director explained the international building codes that the city has adopted by ordinance require building permits to be obtained prior to commencing various types of construction. The codes dictate what requires a permit. It is commonplace for cities to adopt the standards, this practice is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our residents. It also keeps homeowner and commercial property insurance rates down. Cities that choose not to adopt the building codes or exclude parts of the code from adoption, have higher insurance costs. Every city is issued an ISO insurance rating, which assesses a community's ability to suppress fires and protects properties. The rating is used by insurance companies to set homeowners and commercial property insurance rates. Building permits are generally required for any work that alters a building's structure, systems, or use, as well as for new construction. Common examples include new construction (homes, garages, sheds), additions, remodels, decks, and work on electrical, plumbing, or mechanical systems. Included in the list are water heater replacements. Improper installation of a water heater, particularly a gas water heater, can lead to significant risks, including gas leaks, carbon monoxide poisoning, fires, explosions, and water damage. Even electric water heaters pose risks like electrical shocks and fires if not installed correctly. The building permitting process involves reviewing plans prior to construction and conducting inspections throughout the process. Without doubt, these requirements have prevented loss of life and property. Title 9 of the Syracuse Municipal Ordinance governs the city's Building Department. Chapter 9.05.030 says, "Building permit fees, plan review fees, and inspection fees shall be established by the City Council and adopted by resolution from time to time." Sections 9.15.010 through 9.15.060 explains that the city has adopted the International Building Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, National Electrical Code, Uniform Mechanical Code and Uniform Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings. Ordinance 9.05.090 explains that penalties for not complying with the building regulations can be imposed. Penalties may include class B misdemeanor, recording a notice of violation on the property's title, close a building to occupancy, and/or impose civil fines or fees.

The Mayor reviewed the staff memo and invited Building Official Lemmons to answer questions that the Council may have related to building permits and inspections. Councilmember Watson expressed concern regarding the City requiring building permits when a homeowner is replacing established equipment with new equipment; he specifically referenced HVAC systems or components, water heaters, and some electrical updates. Councilmember Watson stated he does not agree with the information included in the packet indicating insurance rates could increase for a homeowner not obtaining a building permit.

CED Director Steele and Building Official Lemmons facilitated a high-level discussion that centered around the international building code (IBC), which the City has adopted, and if the City should change or scale back the requirements in the City code and enforcement of the current code. The Council engaged in philosophical debate of the implications of deviating from reliance on the IBC and ultimately concluded it is in the City's best interests to continue to follow and impose the IBC for purposes of requiring permits for home improvements or repairs.

**Planning item D5: Code Enforcement policies related to business landscaping – first reading**

A staff memo from the Community and Economic Development (CED) Director explained that new commercial buildings are required to install landscaping when the building is constructed. City ordinance requires minimum percentage of landscaping depending on the zone. The General Commercial (GC) zone requires 15% landscaping, and the Industrial (ID) zone requires 10% for example. A landscape plan is required to be designed by an engineer or landscape architect and submitted with the project's site plan. Planning Commission is the land use authority for site plans. Once a project is completed, the ongoing maintenance of the property falls on the property owner and/or tenants depending on the lease arrangements. Chapter 6 in the Syracuse Municipal Ordinance concerning property maintenance says that weeds/grasses are required to be cut down to six inches. It also says that property owners are required to remove dead trees that are a hazard to public or private property. The city can abate only for those two reasons.

*6.10.030 Weed control. - (A) Premises. It is unlawful for any owner, occupant, agent, and/or lessee of real property in the City to fail to maintain the height of weeds and grasses, in the manner provided herein, on such property, or to fail to remove from the property any cuttings from such weeds or grasses. (C) Weed Control Specifications. (1) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (C)(2) of this section, weeds and grasses shall be maintained at a height of not more than six inches at all times, 6.10.060 Dead or diseased trees located on private property. - It shall be unlawful for the owner or occupant of any real property to keep dead or diseased trees that constitute a hazard to public or adjacent private property*

Chapter 10 includes many requirements about how landscaping needs to be installed upon completion of a new project. It says that improvements shall be maintained in a neat and attractive manner. Unfortunately, 'neat and attractive' is a bit of a subjective statement that is difficult to enforce.

*10.20.090 Site plan review. (2) All improvements shown on the approved site plan or amended site plan shall be maintained in a neat and attractive manner.*

The ordinance does not reference bark mulch replenishing, green grass, planting flowers, sprucing up, or making things look nice in general.

**Consolidated Fee Schedule**

- The code enforcement fine section of the consolidated fee schedule includes a \$100 noncompliance fee of \$100 per incident. It also allows for charging abatement contractor costs along with an additional administrative fee.

**History**

- City Council reviewed this item during their work meeting on July 22. They instructed staff to provide a recommended ordinance amendment that would strengthen the city's ability to hold the property owners to a higher standard of maintenance.

The Mayor reviewed the staff memo and facilitated discussion regarding the proposed ordinance with the Council. The discussion centered around escalated fines for incompletion with the ordinance, warning period for fines, and if this proposed ordinance met the requirements the Council was looking for. Councilmember Savage stated he would like to reference in the City code that a revised site plan can be submitted in place of an original site plan. Councilmember Cragun recommended once an escalated daily fine is reached, the code enforcement officer would then come before the City Council, and the Council would make the final decision. The Council showed support for both Councilmember Savage and Councilmember Cragun's recommendations.

The Mayor concluded that this item will move forward to the September 9 business meeting for continued discussion prior to the Council taking action on the item.

**Discussion regarding Syracuse City employee recruitment and retention policy**

A staff memo from Administration explained that this memo initiates a City Council discussion to re-evaluate Syracuse City's Recruitment and Retention Policy. While the catalyst for this re-evaluation is the growing concern over the policy's affordability—particularly in light of wage growth outpacing City revenue growth and the resulting structural deficit in the General Fund—the primary intent of this discussion is twofold:

1. To revisit and re-establish the overall purpose and goals of the policy
2. To identify the full range of levers available to the Council for controlling the policy's long-term cost to the City.

**Revisiting the Purpose and Goals of the Policy**

The current policy aims to:

- Attract and retain the best talent possible in a competitive market

- Minimize inefficiencies associated with high employee turnover and lack of talent
- Provide a stable and transparent system of employee advancement
- Reward performance over tenure
- Benchmark compensation and benefits regularly to remain competitive

Given the current financial strain on the General Fund, now is an appropriate time to re-examine whether the existing balance between competitiveness, predictability, and affordability still aligns with the Council's strategic vision. Key questions to consider include:

- How do we balance fiscal sustainability with competitiveness?
- Are there alternative models (e.g., selective compensation enhancements, or alternative progression strategies) that could achieve the same goals more affordably?

#### **Policy Levers Available to Address Cost**

Below is a summary of specific mechanisms embedded within the current policy that can be adjusted to help manage costs without dismantling the structure of the policy:

- 1. Benchmarking and Wage Scale Adjustments (how do we compete for personnel)**
  - a. The frequency of when wages are benchmarked with the market (currently every two years).
  - b. The comparison group of cities to which wages are compared (currently seven specific cities, with some exceptions).
  - c. The level at which wage scales are set (currently average of the top three cities).
- 2. Career Progression Structure (how do we compensate for growth and more responsibility)**
  - a. Up to two advancements of minimum 5% increase are available in many frontline positions.
  - b. Promotions of minimum 10% increase for increased responsibility.
- 3. Annual Merit-Based Increases (how we reward top performers)**
  - a. Annual merit increase based on employee performance (currently based on the moving 3-yr average of merit increases in benchmark cities)
- 4. Benefits Benchmarking (How we compete on benefits)**
  - a. The frequency of benchmarking benefits with other cities (currently every four years).
  - b. The type and amount of benefits provided.
- 5. Council Budgetary Discretion (Ability to make emergency changes)**
  - a. The ability of the Council to make adjustments to how compensation will be administered and funded, typically during times of financial stress.

The Mayor reviewed the staff memo and explained that the current policy is not sustainable, and that it is not his intention for the Council to solve the problems with the policy in one night; he encouraged the Council to provide their feedback regarding the employee recruitment and retention policy. Councilmember Watson expressed concern regarding the City benchmarking positions with other cities; he stated he believes the current benchmarking practice creates a false escalation of salaries. He asked about the average wage increase City employees have received over the last few years. City Manager Bovero said that information can be provided to the Council.

Councilmember Cragun asked to hear from City Department Heads about the challenges they have experienced with recruitment and retention; he also asked if the salaries offered to City employees are considered competitive. The Mayor invited each Department Head to respond to Councilmember Cragun's questions. Department Heads collectively spoke about the challenges they have experienced with recruiting and retaining quality employees; Parks and Recreation Director Robinson recommended the City perform benchmarking annually rather than every other year and Public Works Director Whiteley spoke to the issues he has experienced with wages for on-call wages for Public Works employees, noting the on-call pay has not been increased for nearly 10 years.

The Mayor concluded that this item will be on a future work session agendas for continued discussion and to review specific sections of the policy and changes that are responsive to tonight's discussion.

#### **Annual fraud risk assessment and review**

Assistant City Manager Marshall provided a report on the City's annual fraud risk assessment; the City received a score of 355, which is considered low risk. The score has not changed since last year's assessment. He noted that he will be submitting a form to the State Auditor's Office indicating that the Council has reviewed the assessment and received a report of the findings.

#### **Discussion regarding scheduling of Heritage Days**

A staff memo from the Parks and Recreation Director Robinson explained Traditionally, Heritage Days have been held during the last week of June. However, several years ago, Hill Air Force Base began hosting their air show on the same weekend. During that first year of overlap, we maintained our usual schedule, but we noticed a decline in attendance and vendor

participation on Saturday during the day, as many chose to attend the airshow. Additionally, our Fire Department provides support at the air show and utilizes the incident trailer during the event. While they remain committed to supporting Heritage Days first, regardless of the week it is held, scheduling both events on the same weekend can create logistical challenges for them. In response, we began adjusting the date of Heritage Days to avoid conflicting with the air show. In years without the air show, we kept Heritage Days on the last week of June. In air show years, we moved it to the week prior. While this approach helped reduce the conflict, it also created confusion among vendors and community members due to the inconsistent scheduling. To resolve this, we propose that Heritage Days be held annually either on the third weekend in June, or in the years when June has five weekends, on the fourth week. This scheduling would ensure that Heritage Days consistently fall on the second-to-last weekend of June each year. This change would eliminate future conflicts with the air show, allow for better planning and promotion, and provide clarity for both participants and the community.

The Mayor briefly reviewed the staff memo and explained that staff are recommending having a permanent date for Heritage Days as the second to last weekend in June. This would eliminate conflicts with the Hill Airforce Base air show. The Council showed support for this item and the Mayor concluded that this item will be on the consent agenda at the next business meeting.

#### **Policy manual amendments- observance of Juneteenth holiday**

A staff memo from the Assistant City Manager explained that the City's current policy is to observe Juneteenth on June 19th whenever it falls during the week. If it falls on a weekend, it is observed closest to the last working day. Saturday would be observed on Friday and Sunday would be observed on Monday. This follows when the federal government observes Juneteenth. Clinton and West Point also follow the federal holiday observation. The State of Utah observes Juneteenth as follows: If June 19th falls on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, the preceding Monday is the legal holiday. If June 19 falls on Saturday or Sunday, the following Monday is the legal holiday.

Mayor Maughan reviewed the staff memo and explained that staff are recommending observing the State of Utah's policy and observing Juneteenth on Monday the week of June 19<sup>th</sup>.

There was a brief discussion and ultimately the Council showed support for this item and the Mayor indicated that this item can move forward to the September 9 business meeting for the Council to vote on.

#### **Discussion regarding proposed reprioritization of the 3000 West culinary and secondary waterline projects in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

A staff memo from the Assistant City Manager explained that staff are proposing to reprioritize some projects in the capital projects plan. The current FY2025 utility project has the following locations budgeted:

- 2925 West and 435 South Streets (Kristalyn Gardens)
- 1275 South Street from 2200 West to 2000 West (Country Crossing)
- 1250 West Street from Dallas to 1350 South (Villa Vista)

This project is taking longer than expected. The contractor will not be able to complete the 1275 South or 1250 West projects by the deadline in the contract. Staff are proposing to move 1275 South and 1250 West projects to fiscal year 2027. Staff are proposing moving up the 3000 West culinary and secondary waterline projects to the current budget year. This project will upsize the City's waterlines from 10" to 12" lines, add valve shutoffs, and move the water lines to the east side of the roundabout. Staff would like to complete this project as soon as possible before the roundabout is built by Costco. The project savings from the 1275 S and 1250 West projects and savings from previously completed projects will offset the 3000 West culinary and secondary water line project. This will not affect the City's ability to complete the 5-year plan as outlined. This reprioritization of projects will be brought back to the council for a budget discussion in September with an October approval. Staff are requesting that council give administration the green light to get started on the 3000 West waterlines project now due to time constraints and construction of the roundabout on 3000 West.

Mayor Maughan reviewed the staff memo and explained that road work is being done on 3000 West currently and staff has recommended reprioritizing projects in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that can be completed easier and less expensive while 3000 West is under construction. Assistant City Manager Marshall stated that staff would like to get started on these projects and a formal budget opening will come to a future business meeting for the Council to take action on.

The Council felt comfortable with the proposal and the Mayor indicated that these items will be included in a budget opening at the October business meeting for the Council to vote on.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

City Council Work Session  
August 26, 2025

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Dave Maughan  
Mayor

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Cassie Z. Brown, MMC  
City Recorder

Date approved: September 9, 2025