



CITY OF ABSECON
Municipal Complex
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Absecon, New Jersey 08201

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CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 19TH, 2026 6:00 PM
MINUTES

FLAG SALUTE

STATEMENT OF THE SUNSHINE LAW & NOTIFICATION THAT THIS MEETING IS ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED

Council President DeRose – The Municipal Clerk is currently out so we have to pass a resolution to appoint for the day a Deputy Clerk Pro-Tem, Mary will be that person once we get to that resolution and that is why we're having some hick-ups this evening.

PRESENTATION – Emma C. Attales Student – Kinley Hubner

Councilwoman Parker: Kinley Hubner was the winner of the VFW Patriot Pen Essay Award., Due to an illness she was unable to read her entire essay at the VFW, so she asked if I could read it tonight so she could get this out and everyone could hear the end of it. Read the winning essay aloud – it's titled "How You Are Showing Patriotism and Support for Our Country." The essay highlighted the importance of pride, respect, and love in everyday actions and attitudes. Kinley's work included anecdotes about her grandfather, a proud Airborne veteran, and, additionally, celebrated the values of freedom, democracy, and diversity. Kinley noted that patriotism can be shown and encouraged through kindness and helping others (e.g. volunteerism, donations, etc.), and emphasized her gratitude to those who serve our country.

Council President DeRose: Thank Kinley for coming tonight. Praised her work and congratulated her on her well-deserved win. As an Army Veteran, thanked Kinley for her kind and thoughtful writing. Gave a shout out to fellow Army veterans present.

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

2026 RESOLUTION OUT OF CONSENT

56 Appointing a Deputy Clerk Pro Tempores for the February 19th, 2026 Council Meeting.

Motioned to move Resolution #56-2026: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman Light
Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Absent; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes;
DeRose - Yes

2026 ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

- 05** An Ordinance repealing and replacing Chapter 224, Article XXV of the Land Use and Development Ordinance entitled “Affordable Housing”.

Motioned for the first reading of Ordinance #05-26: Councilwoman Evans; Seconded: Councilman Clark.

Discussion – J. Amenhauser: This Ordinance was put together by the City Planner and complies with new State regulation that are required through our round four obligations. All municipalities will be passing this Ordinance which must be adopted and filed by March 15th.

President DeRose: Spoke with Jen from the City Planners Office, said State put out the mandate and we are just complying with everything in our phase four. If anyone has any questions you can reach out to Jen and she will be at the next Council Meeting, for any open discussion about it.

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Absent; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes; DeRose – Yes

This Ordinance will be posted, laid over, and published according to law. A Public Hearing, second, and final reading will be held on March 5th, 2026.

2026 ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

Motioned for the second reading of Ordinance #03-2026: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Sykes. Roll Call: Clark–Yes; Evans–Yes; LaRotonda–Absent; Light–Yes; Parker–Yes; Sykes–Yes; DeRose–Yes

- 03** Capital Ordinance providing for various General Capital Improvements and acquisition of various equipment by and in the City of Absecon, appropriating \$120,000 therefore from the General Capital Fund Surplus to pay the cost thereof.

Motioned to open the meeting to the public for comment or discussion of Ordinance #03-2026: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman Sykes
All in Favor, None Opposed.

No Discussion.

Motioned to close the public portion: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Sykes
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Motioned for the final reading and adoption of Ordinance #03-2026: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda
Roll Call: Clark–Yes; Evans–Yes; LaRotonda–Absent; Light–Yes; Parker–Yes; Sykes–Yes; DeRose–Yes

Ordinance #03-2026 has been heard and is finally approved.

Motioned for the second reading of Ordinance #04-2026: Councilman Sykes; Seconded: Councilwoman Evans

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Absent; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes; DeRose – Yes

- 04** Amending the Code of the City of Absecon, adding Chapter 168 – Buildings, Moving of.

Motioned to open the meeting to the public for comment or discussion of Ordinance #04-2026: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Clark.
All in Favor, None Opposed.

No Discussion.

Motioned to close the public portion: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilman Sykes
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Motioned for the final reading and adoption of Ordinance #04-2026: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Clark
Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Absent; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes; DeRose - Yes

Ordinance #04-2026 has been heard and is finally approved.

2026 RESOLUTIONS

CONSENT AGENDA - All matters listed under item, Consent Agenda, are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be discussed separately.

- 54** Amending Resolution #33-2026, confirming meeting of City Committees, Commissions and Boards for the year 2026.
- 55** Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes for the 1st quarter of 2026 on Block 217, Lot 1.
- 56** Authorizing a refund of an overpayment of taxes for the 1st quarter of 2026 on Block 289, Lot 1.

PUBLIC PORTION – (Agenda items only)

Motioned to open to the public: Councilwoman Parker; Seconded: Councilman Sykes
All in Favor, None Opposed.

No discussion.

Motioned to close to the public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilman Sykes
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Council President – Let the record reflect that it's 6:15 and Councilman LaRotonda is now present.

CONSENT AGENDA VOTE

Motioned to move Consent Agenda: Councilman Sykes; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes; DeRose – Yes

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST – \$1,417,959.54

Motioned to accept: Councilman Clark; Seconded: Councilwoman Evans

Roll Call: Clark – Yes; Evans - Yes; LaRotonda – Yes; Light – Yes; Parker – Yes; Sykes – Yes; DeRose – Yes

REPORTS

Councilman Light – Public Works: Have not yet met. Will meet on March 2nd at 5pm. Noted good cooperation and communication with Police Chief Laughlin, Engineering Staff, and Atlantic City Electric, in rectifying broken street lights. Estimated that 80% of the lights have been repaired. Emphasized the lights importance for public safety. Asked for the Engineer to address DOT and County related questions. Praised Public Works for their hard work, with recent snow and ice.

Councilman Clark – Going to piggy back on Public Works for a second - asked N. DiCosmo to share recent Engineering updates regarding Shore Road.

N. DiCosmo: Received and email from the County stating that their plans are signed and approved, and will now go out for bidding. The schedule, according to the email, indicated that the project will go to purchasing, immediately upon the City signing the plans, for several weeks. The project will then be advertised for 4 weeks, so an award is anticipated for May. Expect to have the Pre-Construction Meeting in June, and hopefully begin construction in July 2026. Summarized that the project has been approved and will be going out to bid.

President DeRose: Acknowledged potential issues with summertime traffic and detours, but noted that it will be good to finish construction before the fall and winter flooding.

N. DiCosmo: Estimated a 7-month timeline for the project.

Councilman Clark – Finance - Met this evening. Discussed matters relating to budget, such as salaries and general preparation for the year. Salary increases were considered for crossing guards, Class II Officers, and salaried staff and discussed looking for a new CFO.

Councilwoman Evans – Community Affairs: Has not met since last meeting. Next meeting will be March 5th, as a reminder the meeting has been moved up from 5:30PM to 5:00PM due to the change in Council Meeting start time.

Councilwoman Parker – Public Safety: Have not met since last meeting. One of the new Absecon Police Officers, Officer Melendez, went a bit viral recently for going the extra mile and community presence.

Chief Laughlin: Recognized that, although not usually shared to the public, these positive incidents occur with the Absecon Police quite often. Appreciated that someone in the public was nice enough to give Officer Melendez a kudos. Addressed the lighting on Route 30. Currently working with Atlantic City Electric so expecting some repairs in the near future. Asked the public for patience. Warned the public, that in the case of heavy snow, they must clean off their cars. Cautioned the public about the potential dangers. Asked that people take a little bit of extra time to clean off their vehicles before driving.

Councilwoman Parker: Will meet again on March 2nd at 6pm. Congratulated Absecon resident, Lauren Cella, for recently scoring her 1,000th points in basketball for Holy Spirit High School.

Councilman Sykes – Parks & Playgrounds: Met this last Tuesday to pick the bands for Concerts in the Park. Chose 10 bands they will invite to perform this summer. The schedule has not been set yet. Once the bands and schedule are confirmed, will share with Councilwoman Evans so that they can be posted to Community Affairs. Discussed possibly painting the goalpost at the football field for the upcoming season, repairing/replacing the lights at the end of the cul-de-sac, and painting the foul posts at the baseball fields. March Madness will begin the first week of March.

Councilman Light: Clarified that the lighting previously discussed is, in fact, city-owned.

Councilman LaRotonda – Code Enforcement: First meeting was on Tuesday. Stated that the meeting was very productive. Those in attendance included Councilwoman Evans, Administrator Jessica Snyder, and Officer Leigh Gadd. Discussed plans to review and update the Codebook. Asked Officer Gadd to provide a list of Codes that he believes to be top priority, so that they can address them within the next few months. Recognized the need to routinely review and update outdated Ordinances. Next meeting will be March 17th at 4pm.

City Clerk: Monthly Report – January 2026

Municipal Clerk's Office: \$6,180

Construction Office: \$170,692

Tax Office: \$1,642,192.92

Municipal Court: \$6,313.50

N. DiCosmo - City Engineer: Last week submitted grant application for this year's Local Recreation Improvement Grant. The application was for additional funds for the multi-use sports facility pole bar structure at Pitney Park. Sent in proposal to do the engineering and prepare plans for bidding. In the upcoming weeks intends to design the building and prepare the bidding, at the same time, the City raises money through fundraising efforts. Still waiting for the 2025 Road Program at Delaware Avenue to begin, waiting for the temperature to warm up. Received submittals so starting to see activity with the Contractor. Will be returning to the Pedestrian Crosswalk Safety Improvement Project; raised crosswalks, waiting for snow to melt to conduct additional surveying required to finalize the design. Working through some projects for the 2026 Budget, focusing on DOT Grant Funded Projects (i.e. additional Pedestrian Crosswalk Safety Improvement projects, paving projects, and NJDEP Infrastructure Bank-funded Stormwater Projects.) In regard to Councilman Light's request, they have several contacts with the DOT, so will reach out to them about the lighting issues on Route 30.

Councilman Clark: Asked when they plan to go out to bid for the raised crosswalk project.

N. DiCosmo: Estimated that they are about 1-2 months out from finishing up with the DOT. Stated that the DOT takes about a month to review. After their review, they will go out to bid.

Councilman Clark: Questioned whether the project will be done before the commencement of the 2026-2027 school year.

N. DiCosmo: Believes that timeline is achievable.

Councilman Light: Could we look into any ADA grants for ADA Accessible restrooms for Heritage Park.

N. DiCosmo: We can take a look and see what's available. Considered possibly a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Have had success in the past, although not recently.

Jessica Snyder – City Administrator: City Hall is finalizing cybersecurity training requirements. In the case that the City gets another snowstorm, asks the public for patience. Praised Public Works for their hard work, six guys working practically around the clock.

President DeRose: The Clerk's Office has been closed, however there is a sign on the door directing traffic to the Tax Office and they can handle a lot of the Clerk duties. Asked for people in need of service to call ahead.

PUBLIC PORTION

Motioned to open to the public: Councilman Sykes; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Sandy Hickerson – 210 Upland Avenue: Is looking for guidance from Council. Shared that she works at Absecon Shoprite where the parking lot always smells of cannabis. Fellow employees and customers complain about the smell. Has gone to management about the issue. In addition to being bothered by the smell herself, is concerned about little children breathing in the smell.

President DeRose: Clarified that it is not legal to smoke publicly.

S. Hickerson: Indicated that people are doing it anyway. Suggested that the Police Chief have officers patrol the Shoprite area more frequently. Has already asked management to take action, such as potentially posting a prohibition sign. Management indicated that any action would require a corporate decision. Asked Council if Shoprite would be able to post a sign prohibiting any smoking at or nearby the store.

President DeRose: Clarified with Chief Laughlin how that is already the current law.

Chief Laughlin: Stated that, unfortunately, this is the new reality of the situation. Explained that Police are getting calls from people complaining about the smell of cannabis coming from their neighbor's private residence. Due to its legalization, the Police are very limited on what action they may take regarding cannabis. People can notify the police if they witness someone smoking, however, if it's on private property they have the legal right. The City has Ordinances prohibiting the smoking of cannabis in City parks.

President DeRose: Affirmed that Council would not stop Shoprite from posting a smoking prohibition sign.

Councilman LaRotonda: As a private business, Shoprite has that right.

Councilman Sykes: Acknowledged the odor of cannabis at Shoprite, but admitted that he's never seen anybody actively smoking on the property. Suggested that the strong odor lingers on the individuals after smoking in vehicles. Compared the lingering characteristic of the odor to be similar to cigarette odor. Reiterated that unless they are smoking out in the public, there is not much the City can do.

S. Hickerson: Expressed concern that she would test positive for cannabis due to her secondhand exposure. Is going to tell management that the City has no issue with Shoprite posting a sign about the issue. Thanked Council for their help.

Roger Dutch – 315 Pennsylvania Avenue: Several years ago, there was construction on the road in front of his driveway. More recently, there was construction in front of his neighbor's house to run pipes or gas. The road has since settled and has not repaired. The cracks have spread all throughout where construction has been completed.

President DeRose: Asked which utility it was.

R. Dutch: Believes the construction was possibly for water and then gas.

President DeRose: Asked pictures to be sent his phone with an estimated timeframe of occurrence. They have dealt with similar issues in the past in which the issue, in time, was rectified by the utility.

Chief Laughlin: Indicated that he will go and check the situation out.

R. Dutch: Since I'm here will I be able to purchase a boat ramp permit tomorrow?

J. Snyder: Informed R. Dutch that they will be available for purchase tomorrow until 10:30am.

President DeRose: The Tax Office is able to do them, and to the person on Facebook I apologize that it didn't happen today, but you can come back tomorrow before 10:30am to get it done.

R. Dutch: Praised Absecon Public Works for their hard work.

Motioned to close to the public: Councilman Light; Seconded: Councilwoman Evans
All in Favor, None Opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned to adjourn: Councilman Sykes; Seconded: Councilman LaRotonda
All in Favor, None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie A. Crone RMC".

Carie A. Crone, City Clerk

Approved: 3-19-26