

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

JULY 2, 2025 – 7:00 PM

City Hall – 2nd Floor Council Chambers
47 Castle Street
Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Steve Valentino, Mayor

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Petropoulos; seconded by Clr. Lavin

MOVED THAT council move to executive session at 6:00 to discuss collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (7-2 absent)

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos

MOVED THAT council exit executive session at 6:50pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos

MOVED THAT council recess at 6:50pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Whitfield, Clr. Moracco, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Pealer (arrived at 6:01), Clr. Lavin, Clr. Brennan

Absent: Clr. Grimaldi

3. PUBLIC HEARING - Sale of City Owned Property – 63 Gates Avenue

Mayor Valentino opened the Public Hearing at 7:02pm. With no comment offered at this time, he closed the public hearing at 7:02pm.

4. PUBLIC HEARING - Commencing Chapter 111 Enforcement at 314-316 Castle Street

Mayor Valentino opened the public hearing at 7:02pm

Dan Long, the architect working with the owners of 314-316 Castle Street on cleaning up property and re-development thanked City for the additional time they've been allowed to clean up or demolish the building. He explained that the property owners are still pursuing bids, and have engaged environmental engineers

for an asbestos containing materials survey. He expects demolition under abatement to be recommended. Mr. Long explained that no materials will go into the air upon demolition; however, some materials will have to go to an asbestos containing materials designated dump site. The property owners are awaiting the final asbestos report to bring in the correct contractor for the demolition. Mr. Long shared that the timeframe has been revised, he expects estimates will be in by end of this month, awards might be made by August 1st. The owners aren't asking the City for an extension, rather, they are hoping to beat Council's deadlines. Mr. Long shared that he would like to see the site cleaned up, and further development happen. He also shared that the property owners still have future plans for development of the property, noting that the new zoning provides more flexibility for that redevelopment. He further shared that the property owners will continue to do what they need to, to remedy the property. In closing Mr. Long explained that details have been discussed with Supervisor Braman and Director Venuti, proving that the property owners are being open with the City.

Linda Equinozzi, Castle Street resident, has lived on Castle Street for over 20 years. She recalled the blaze that gutted plaza at 314-316 Castle Street, noting that since that time the destroyed building has sat in disrepair. Ms. Equinozzi shared that she started a Change.org petition this spring asking the property owners to demolish the building. Her petition has 561 signatures. Ms. Equinozzi recognizes that the removal of this building is complicated, but firmly believes that three years is plenty of time to plan and execute demolition. She reminded Council that the property owners have missed several City deadlines. She also recalled the devastating Ovid fire this January, noting that cleanup concluded five months later. Ms. Equinozzi encourages City Council to commence the Ch.111 process for this unsafe structure.

Sharon Hukan of Castle Street, has lived there for 40 years. She enjoyed having a mini mart and laundry in neighborhood prior the fire. Despite passage of time, she notes that the building remains standing, an environmental hazard, and an eyesore. Ms. Hukan believes the structure should be razed. She noted that NYSEG recently put new sidewalk in, in front of the property promptly after they completed their work. She also has concerns about asbestos containing materials that are remaining in the building after such a devastating fire.

Arthur Equinozzi of Castle Street recalled the fire that burned 314-316 Castle Street three years ago, with delay after delay regarding clean up, repair, or demolition from the property owners. He noted that Insurance money should take care of the business of repair or demolition. Mr. Equinozzi believes it is time to take action, and the property owners need to pay what they need to pay and move forward.

5. PUBLIC HEARING - CDBG Program and NYS 2025 Consolidated Funding Application

Mayor Valentino opened the Public Hearing at 7:13pm. With no comment offered at this time, he closed the public hearing at 7:13pm.

6. AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

ACTION TAKEN by Mayor Valentino; seconded by Clr. Lavin

MOVED THAT the agenda be amended to add an amendment to Resolution 34-2025 supporting the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway Nomination and Corridor Management Plan Adoption

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

7. PRESENTATION – Recreation Study Overview

Jarod Beardsley of Beardsley Architects & Engineers presented a high level overview of prior work done to the Recreation Complex including original construction in 1978, a 2002 Capital Project that included Team Rooms, Floor Replacement, and Foundation Repair, and a 2008 Capital Project that included Glass Enclosure, Loe-E Ceiling, Lighting, and Mezzanine/Seating. Mr. Beardsley noted that the facility is mentioned in the Ontario County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Geneva's Comprehensive Plan and the DRI Downtown Vision Plan. Current conditions were reviewed to include the building envelope being sound, refrigeration system obsolete, HWS spaces serviceable, visitor/youth team rooms inadequate, circulation having major conflicts, summer programs experiencing heat, Audio/Visual systems inaudible, restrooms over capacity, and the dog park having drainage issues.

This study included engagement with HWS Athletics, Geneva Business Improvement District, Geneva Generals Youth Hockey Program, Geneva High School, and both current and prior maintenance contractors. Feedback was sought from the community via workshops and stakeholder outreach. Findings from this outreach include summer programs being very hot, youth hockey tournament opportunities being limited by the facilities, appreciation of the proximity to downtown, circulation between restrooms, team rooms, public spaces and spectator area being a major issue, desire to grow and collaborate with community groups, desire to evolve into a more wholistic community center, desire for enhancing outdoor spaces, revisiting a playground and dog park, and time for investment.

Mr. Beardsley shared capital project scenarios. The first scenario is in-kind rehabilitation including replacement of refrigeration and floor, minor reconfiguration and facelift, and system upgrades to address functional deficiencies and provide a facelift. The next scenario offered was a community center addition to the existing rink, with improvements to the rink itself. Additional items include demolition of back of house and locker rooms, and the addition of a maintenance building. An expansion would add a community center function with one or two stories, between 6-18 rooms. There would also be improved facilities for officials and athletes. This scenario would also include system upgrades, and replacement of refrigeration and the floor. The last scenario offered would be a demolition and reconstruction of the facility. This option is less feasible as site constraints would be challenging, including parking reconfiguration and property acquisitions. It's also possible to look at smaller incremental projects, however with the economy of scale for a project like this, chipping away little by little costs more. Mr. Beardsley explained that his firm will work with the City to determine the preferred option, apply for BRICKS program funds with an application circled around a multi-use community center that will include community rooms, and gym space for year round use.

City Manager Hendrix explained that the scope of this study is small, with no engineering or total design. Funding will be applied for through the Consolidated Funding App, due on August 15 with a community center focus. She explained that there is a 20% local cost, and potential for private/public partnerships.

8. DISCUSSION - MAP Grant Selection Committee

Councilor Pealer explained that the MAP grant is now called BEST, and that funds are passed through the City to provide opportunities for local businesses. He explained that Council's role in the process has been to approve awards openly after selection occurs, and that he'd like to see a member of Council on the panel as an observer of the process. Mayor Valentino wondered what the current makeup of the selection committee is. City Manager Hendrix explained that the panel is comprised of the BID, LDC, IDA and coordinated by the Executive Director of the IDA. She explained that applications have to meet state guidelines, and that a rubric from the state is utilized for scoring, and selections. Discussion followed around a Councilmember being a

non-voting observer. Council agrees that the Mayor will appoint a Council observer to the next selection committee.

9. **DISCUSSION - CDBG Facilities Grant Application – Replacement of 2006 Fire Engine**

Chief Parrotta informed Council of this funding opportunity, to replace a 2006 fire engine that is past its service life. He explained that the City would need to cover costs over \$1 million. City Manager Hendrix shared that this funding includes \$5,000 for administration costs, and noted that the city will have cost share even if the cost for a replacement apparatus is under \$1 million.

Chief Parrotta explained that the 2006 fire engine incurred \$14,000 in maintenance costs last year, and is past its reserve life. He also explained that turn around time for a new spec and build is three to four years. It was noted that resale for the 2006 fire engine is expected to be under \$15,000. Discussion followed around why replacement has been delayed, and funding opportunities. City Manager Hendrix explained that the city's CDBG rep advised that this is the clearest project for this funding stream, and explained that this apparatus replacement has been delayed for several years in the capital plan. The apparatuses status and use as a reserve vehicle was also discussed.

10. **GCSD West Street School Project**

Director Venuti thanked the School District for sharing information on their proposed West Street School project. Director Venuti has reviewed the project, plans, and traffic studies conducted. He doesn't believe that the project will impact the quality of life or safety in the neighborhood, and recommends moving forward with the project. Mayor Valentino read a letter sent to the City by the School District's attorney. Mayor Valentino views the communication as disappointing, drawing a line in the sand, and threatening lawsuits. Mayor Valentino explained that he doesn't want to see the fabric of the community disrupted by this project, noting that he'd love to do something, but his hands are tied.

Councilor Moracco wondered if the school has enough green space. City Manager Hendrix advised that the NYS Department of Education says it meets their greenspace requirements. Discussion followed around some of the land formerly being a park. City Manager Hendrix confirmed that space is part of the District's property. The new traffic pattern was described to include parents dropping off, off of Nursery, while the bus loop will be on Optical. Discussion followed, and it was noted that the City doesn't have final designs to reference. Councilor Lavin expressed concern for safety, and for academic performance in the District. He also noted that residents moved into the neighborhood knowing there was a school there, and should be proud that the school is being improved greatly while the city takes one on the chin via the attorney letter. Councilor Pealer raised concerns about the new traffic configuration affecting more people across the community. Discussion followed.

11. **CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES**

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Pealer; seconded by Clr. Gillotte

MOVED THAT the minutes of the May 28, 2025, June 4, 2025, and June 17, 2025 Council meetings be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (7-1 absent)

12. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Wendy Marsh spoke in concern for mental illness in the country. She noted that Willard Psychiatric Center closed with the de-centralizing of mental health care, which has moved to community-based care models. She explained that when New York State stopped funding psychiatric centers, those residents were moved into supportive housing, funded through the state budget. Ms. Marsh explained that supportive housing eligibility exists in two programs, diagnosis and low income; and homeless or at risk with serious diagnosis like HIV, AIDS, or substance abuse. She further explained that supportive services include learning how to live independently, cook, clean, shop, etc., which she sees as subjective if they need assistance for everyday life. Ms. Marsh further explained that the workforce housing half of the units in the proposed Lakeview project will go through the same application process as the Lakeview clients will. She suggested that this isn't an affordable housing project, rather a sales pitch rebrand with the purpose of services for mental health. She recalled the size of the proposed building, taking over the entire block, being taller than any other building in historic downtown. She noted that the only similar sized building in the City is the 41 Lakefront Hotel. Ms. Marsh concluded by sharing that she came before Council because the applicant is before the planning board.

Dave Linger recalled a couple dozen residents who have spoken and provided written comments in opposition of the Lakeview project. He suggested that Lakeview hired and paid people to give their opinion of the project. He further shared that he believes the project is too large with too high a proportion of special needs beds, having been given conversions by an expert with great credentials. He reiterated that he believes the project is the wrong size with the wrong mix of people.

Dan Beckers of Wadsworth Street wondered what the expectation of councilors is, as he saw that Councilor Pealer recently called out the City on social media for supporting Juneteenth and the image behind it, posting a YouTube link to propaganda with comments that Geneva is crooked on his social media account. Mr. Beckers wondered if the Councilor thinks Geneva is crooked for being inclusive and accepting people. He suggested that if a councilor doesn't like Geneva they should step down, believing that we can fix issues with the right mindset, together. There was then some back and forth between Mr. Beckers and Councilor Pealer.

Melissa Killeleagh shared that she has lived in Geneva with her family for six years. She attended last month's meeting with her young son, who shared tonight that his school goes to Richards Park to play. Ms. Killeleagh explained that she's glad the park foundation is involved in improving the park that recently had its playground equipment removed. She also shared that she moved to Geneva because her family is part of the community, and shared concern for the last exchange between a speaker and councilor. She also shared that her son goes to school at the corner of Lewis and Genesee Streets. In the years that she has lived in Geneva, Ms. Killeleagh explained that decisions are made without involving the school, including soil remediation, park decisions, and FLACRA moving into a building on Lewis Street, all of which have impacted the school. Ms. Killeleagh has seen illicit drug use at school pickup, and the school was not involved in whether there is a plan for replacing playground equipment at Richards Park. She suggested putting the Lakeview people within walking distance to a grocery store, rather than blocks from a school, wondering how it will change the dynamic where kids are outside playing, raising concerns that the project will deeply affect the community for years to come.

13. CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Hendrix provided the following updates:

City Staff Vacancies

The two cost savings vacancies that are currently in place as part of the 2025 budget process are a sergeant and police officer. A third vacancy of the Recreation Director will begin on July 11, 2025.

To assist in reducing the total 2025 budget a rolling vacancy of at least two positions must be kept until at least

~\$200,000 of cost savings is achieved. As of May 31, 2025, a cost savings of \$134,827 has been achieved.

Trainings

- The Assessor and Human Resources Department staff member attended a training with Ontario County on *Going from Peer to Leader*. The County has graciously opened up their training opportunities to the City at no charge.
- City Staff have begun to complete the mandatory training requirements for all New York State Employers. These trainings are all being provided in a virtual format through a new platform. This is the first year that we have had the ability to email all employees and allow them to take their mandatory trainings on-line.
- I am planning to attend the International City/County Management Association Annual Conference occurring in October 2025. This conference offers forward-thinking sessions on challenges directly impacting our community—such as sustainability, innovation, equity, housing, and crisis response. I continue to look back at my 2024 notes, and attached them to this email so you can see some of the great sessions that I will have the fortune of participating in.

2025 Assessed Value and Equalization

We have received the New York State Office of Real Property Services Computation of the Final State Equalization Rate for the 2025 Assessment Roll. The Total Assessed Value for the City of Geneva in 2025 is \$737,305,329 (this is the number used to establish the tax rate). The Equalization Rate for the City of Geneva is 92.00%. The equalization rate is the ratio of a municipality's total assessed value to its total market value. A 92% equalization rate means that, on average, properties in that municipality are assessed at 92% of their full market value.

Waste Water Treatment Plant ATAD Expansion Construction Bids

The bids were received on Thursday for the construction of the ATAD expansion. This project began with the awarding of funding in 2022. The City, Town of Geneva, and Town of Waterloo are partners on this project via their IMA from September 2022. Funding sources include: grants from EFC, grants from Ontario County/NYS ESD on infrastructure, no- interest financing, and a shared bond.

Request for Proposal

We will soon be releasing a RFP for a contractor to support water meter replacements.

GEDC Innovation Kitchen

The City oversees/manages an innovation kitchen by leasing a space from the IDA and subcontracting its operation to an outside entity, creating a complex structure of kitchen ownership. Recently Webster Property Management employee notified our code office regarding concerns with the kitchen. Director Venuti and our tenant are actively communicating to resolve the current code issues, with Mr. Bates (the tenant) coordinating with contractors to address the matter.

The kitchen has not had strong oversight by the City. We have maintained operations to the best of our ability and as new tenants have arrived, we've replaced and upgraded equipment as needed, with some original equipment funded by grants and further changes made as the kitchen evolved. I have concerns about our ability to manage facility rentals and leasing to outside entities; while the original vision for the kitchen as a vibrant community hub was admirable, it has yet to be realized, and unfortunately, the current tenant's operations have been inconsistent and have not met expectations.

2026 Budget Process

Departmental budget submissions are due to the Comptroller today. Department budgets must include a 5% reduction to total operating costs and departments may also submit requests for above required maintenance items or ARMs. In the coming two weeks, the Comptroller and I will begin reviewing department requests, with a series of meetings with all department heads beginning the week of July 21. We will utilize the information council provided in your budget setting meetings along with the departments on-going work plans to prepare the 2026 budget. An update on the budget process will be part of the August council agenda.

Short Term Rentals

We have received permitting fees and applications from 56 short-term rentals within the City of Geneva, and 38 of those have successfully passed safety inspections conducted by the Code Enforcement team.

However, there are still 53

known STR properties that have not yet submitted their required applications.

Earlier this week, the Code office sent formal notices to all noncompliant property owners informing them that they are currently operating in violation of city regulations and have 30 days to comply. Code Enforcement Officers will begin follow-up inspections and documentation of noncompliant properties. Where violations persist, we will work with City Legal to initiate formal enforcement actions, which can include daily fines for non-compliance. Additionally, staff will continue to track compliance and provide regular updates on registration numbers, safety certifications, and enforcement activity to City Council. The STR code can be found here: <https://ecode360.com/45427629#45427629>.

Meeting with Cook Properties

City staff met this week with Cook Properties who are developing the properties on Middle and Hallenbeck. The group is proposing four manufactured homes on this site. The Phase I environmental has led to the need for a Phase II environmental, a item that the team did not expect. They will be asking the LDC for assistance with funding this study. If the Phase II comes back with remediation work, there may be further requested regarding site clean up. Additionally,

the area is zoned for certain sidewalk requirements and staff are working with Cook on ways to create these spaces. We are hopeful that we will find solutions to bring this project to fruition.

GEDC July 1 Meeting

The City of Geneva's Industrial Development Agency (IDA) is preparing for a pivotal discussion next week regarding the future of the Geneva Enterprise Development Center (GEDC). Tom Mancuso of the Mancuso Group will lead a conversation focused on reimagining the GEDC and exploring opportunities for business development at the center as well as the current operations. The agenda includes a review of the GEDC's current operations, collaboration on innovative solutions, and collective efforts to shape the next phase of Geneva's economic growth. This meeting represents an important step in evaluating how our partnerships and business incubation strategies can be enhanced to better support the region. Hosted by the IDA, the event will take place at the Bozzuto Center on Tuesday, July 1, and will focus on making key decisions related to the GEDC's future. Council members who are available should plan to attend as there will likely be budget ramifications related to our current rental agreements and the demolition of part of the building.

IDA Public Hearing – Lakeview Lofts PILOT Application

The IDA will have a public hearing for Lakeview Lofts on July 10 at 6pm in Council Chambers. The project documents can be found at the bottom of the [IDA website](#), with all other project information.

Planning Department Support from Ontario County

Ontario County has assisted the City with completing our zoning documents by finalizing the approved map from the most recent zoning updates. Funding for this update was not included in our zoning re-write and we do not staff or technology resources currently in house to develop the files for this work. The Ontario County Planning Department stepped in and completed the files which also allowed us to keep our Pro-Housing designation with the state.

Meeting with DRI Funders

Staff met with the staff from Empire State Development, Department of State - DRI, and Department of State - Local Waterfront Revitalization Program on what happens now that the long pier extension has been voted down, how funds can be returned or reimbursed. The funding from LWRP is only available for the area that the Marina was proposed and related to the permits we have already obtained. The DRI funds may be used within the DRI area on projects that were already approved. The LWRP staff are okay with not taking back funds and expending the remaining funds if the City can prepare a plan to supplement the current docking system near Long Pier with new docks, if the work can be completed by December 2025.

This DRI funds could also go this work.

This will be a big lift for staff, and we are working with our engineers to create a plan to potentially complete this work this summer. Council will be appraised of any developments on realizing this funding. If we are not able to make the dock work happen, we will work with LWRP on whatever the next steps are to return the funds and DRI to find another solution (likely more work on the lake tunnel).

Department of Labor Budget Presentation

NYS Department of Labor (DOL) Commissioner Roberta Reardon will be in town on Monday, July 7th from 2-3pm at the Hobart and William Smith Bozzuto Center for Entrepreneurship, 22 Castle Street, Geneva, NY, 14456. Commissioner Reardon will be presenting on recent NYS state budget and sharing updates from DOL.

RSVPs can be sent to Elizabeth.Morabito@labor.ny.gov.

Governor Hochul's Security Briefing

Staff attended the Governor's security briefing. Below are brief notes from the meeting.

Summary:

The state is taking a proactive, coordinated approach to potential threats. Local governments are expected to communicate closely with state partners and reinforce community awareness. Ongoing updates and assistance will be available through regional governor's offices and DHSES.

Heightened Security Awareness:

In response to the Israel-Iran conflict, New York State is enhancing public safety and cyber preparedness. No credible threats to NY at this time, but statewide vigilance is elevated.

Increased Patrols:

State Police directed to boost presence at houses of worship and high-risk locations, supporting both Jewish and Muslim communities.

New Cybersecurity Law:

Local governments must report cyber incidents and ransomware attempts to DHSES within 72 hours.

The state will provide technical assistance and support.

Public Engagement Encouraged:

Officials are urged to promote the "See Something, Say Something" campaign and encourage residents to report

suspicious online or in-person behavior.

Infrastructure Protection:

Law enforcement presence increased at bridges, transit hubs, and highways; coordination with FBI, DHS, and local agencies ongoing.

Threat Monitoring:

NYSP Counter Terrorism reports top concerns include cyberattacks on infrastructure, lone-actor threats, foreign propaganda influence, and protest escalation. No direct threats observed yet.

Resources & Reporting:

Terrorism Tip Line: 1-866-SAFE-NYS

Hate Incident Reporting: 1-844-NO-TO-HATE
Emergencies: 911

We have updated our City homepage with the teaser video for our upcoming video releases from CGI. The scripted video now welcomes folks to our homepage.

Recreation Summer Camp

Summer camp registration is now open for children ages 5-12. Camp runs July 7th – August 15th in ½ day or full day sessions. Information on summer camp can be found here:

<https://www.cityofgenevany.gov/259/Recreation-Department> and scholarships are available!

Concert Series

The Lakefront Concert Series will kick off on July 9 with Patrisha Blue and the MLK Choir. For more information on our concert series please visit: <https://www.cityofgenevany.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=210>

DPW Support to Community Events

Provided traffic control for recent funeral service and family gathering. Attached is a Thank You note that staff received for their assistance.

Staff prepared and attended Bicentennial Park concert event

Recreation Complex Study Information

At your July 2 meeting, Beardsley Consulting will present their study findings and conceptual recommendations for the recreation complex, based on community input, past planning, and current conditions. I previously sent the rink budgets and RFP on Thursday, June 26. This study is exploratory, and any next steps will require further engineering and design work. To prepare for potential grant opportunities, I'll ask Council to consider serving as SEQRA lead agency—a necessary step before improvements or funding applications. Some facility upgrades are needed soon, regardless of future management. If we pursue New York State Bricks funding (up to \$15 million, with a 20% match), we'll need to hold a public hearing; private partnerships could help meet the match. The grant application is due August 15, 2025, and both SEQRA designation and grant approval will come to Council on July 2 or July 9. I look forward to working together to support the recreation complex.

Lake Tunnel Completion

The DPW team is working with the contractor to finalize all punch list items and completion of the lake tunnel.

Castle Street

The spec reviews have been completed for this work. We are awaiting dates for the next phase of street reconstruction.

Resource Recovery Park

Our Buildings and Grounds staff and electrician worked together to create conduit trenching at the Resource Recovery park. We will do another push regarding sign-ups for the park.

Debris Pick Up Program

We've heard some questions about why large machinery is used for yard debris, even when piles look small. Here's why:

- That equipment helps our crews safely and efficiently handle heavy loads across the entire route — not just one stop.
- The team members you see are working in coordinated roles. Even if not, everyone is out of the truck at each stop, they're part of a system designed to keep things moving quickly and reduce the risk of injury.

We're also looking into recent concerns about possible road damage. Resident feedback matters, and we're on it.

We thank our community for their patience as we keep balancing safety, cost, and quality service for our community.

Community Parks Foundation and Richards Park

I met with Councilmember Petropoulos who brought along Gabriella D'Angelo to talk about the Community Parks Foundation desire to assist with Richard's Park. The group would like to add a picnic table, Adirondack chairs, a little library, a dog waste station, and a gaga ball pit. This group of volunteers is eager to work with City staff and community partners to secure resources and donations. B&G Director Higgins will meet with the group to see how we can bring these improvements to life.

14. RESOLUTION – Sale of City Owned Property - 63 Gates Avenue

City Manager Hendrix presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva has identified surplus real estate that is not serving a city goal; and

WHEREAS, the Geneva City Council has deemed that the property located at 63 Gates Avenue (90.20-1-11) no longer serves a public purpose and should be leased or sold to a private party; and

WHEREAS, the Property has been deemed fit for redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, the Cracker Factory has offered an annual lease of \$750.00 per year, with an option to purchase the lease at any time for \$1.00, subject to approval by the DEC.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Geneva City Council approves of the aforementioned agreement with the Cracker Factory to lease the property with an option to purchase, and that the City Manager is hereby authorized to execute any documents reasonably necessary to complete the lease with option to purchase 63 Gates Avenue in accordance with the terms in the subject lease.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Petropoulos; seconded by Clr. Gillotte

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

15. RESOLUTION – Amending Resolution 42-2025 Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway Nomination and Corridor Management Plan Adoption

Mayor Valentino presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the historic qualities of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway, as described in the corridor management plan, and the surrounding areas have been appreciated and celebrated for over a century by the residents of New York State, as well as tourists, historians, artists, authors, and other visitors to the region; and it is this unique combination of the journeys of Harriet Tubman and those Freedom Seekers who traveled on the Underground Railroad that create the special sense of place that is vital in telling the New York story of the human desire for freedom and the historic sites they utilized during their journey to emancipation; and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway, composed of representatives of 22 municipalities along the proposed scenic byway route, committed to

working cooperatively to protect and promote the historic, scenic, recreational, and economic well-being of the 544-mile Corridor throughout the state and agreed to pursue the nomination of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway Steering Committee, each of the 22 counties contributed to the development of this corridor management plan by encouraging public participation, confirming the vision and goals, and leading individual meetings of the Collaborative; and

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway, consisting of relatives of Harriet Tubman, descendants of Freedom Seekers, Harriet Tubman and/or Underground Railroad historians, representatives from state and federal agencies, has strengthened the historic integrity, representation, and the principles of the corridor management plan; and

WHEREAS, in the process of developing this corridor management plan, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway Steering Committee has strengthened the bonds of inter-municipal cooperation, and the involved entities envision further benefit through scenic byway designation including sustained collaborative progress, increased funding opportunities for recommendations identified in the plan, enhanced partnerships with agencies responsible for the stewardship of resources along and adjacent to the byway route, and an improved visitor experience that interprets and promotes the corridor's intrinsic qualities and resources; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva supports the designation of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway which includes programs for stewardship and enhancement of the historic scenic byway and guidance to manage future activities along its corridor; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva confirms that they will abide by and follow all existing New York State and Federal laws and regulations that are applicable to this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva will work in partnership with the other municipalities along the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad New York Scenic Byway and local and regional stakeholders in order to support future Byway programs, economic development, marketing, and collaborate with these interested entities to explore opportunities for cooperation to realize the Scenic Byway goals.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr.; seconded by Clr.

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

16. ORDINANCE – First Reading Addressing Aggressive Panhandling

Chief Eveland presented the following resolution:

Be it **ENACTED AND ORDAINED**, by the Geneva City Council, as follows:

Chapter 256, Article III

- A. Legislative intent. This Ordinance should be adopted in order to protect persons from threatening, intimidating or harassing behavior, to keep public places safe and attractive for use by all members of the community and to maintain and preserve public places where all of the community can interact in a peaceful manner. This ordinance is also intended to provide for the free flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on streets and sidewalks in the City, to promote tourism and business and preserve the quality of urban life. The Council finds that aggressive acts associated with solicitation tend to interfere with the free flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic and intimidate persons in public places, and in addition, can lead to disruption and disorder in public places. Aggressive acts can also cause persons to avoid public places and lead to declining patronage of commercial establishments and tourism. The Council further finds that solicitation in certain public places is inconsistent with the use of those places, is inherently intimidating, targets persons who are captive audiences or constitutes an invasion of privacy as persons are not able to simply move on if they do not wish to speak to the person soliciting. Solicitation in proximity to bank entrances or check-cashing businesses or automated teller machines is inherently intimidating and should be restricted. By this legislation, the Council intends to promote the health, safety and welfare of the citizens and visitors to the City.
- B. Definitions. Whenever the following words and phrases are used in this section, they shall have the following meanings:

AGGRESSIVE MANNER

1. Intentionally or recklessly making any physical contact with or touching another person in the course of the solicitation, or approaching within an arm's length of the person, except with the person's consent;
2. Following the person being solicited, if that conduct is:
 - a. Intended to or is likely to cause a reasonable person to fear imminent bodily harm or the commission of a criminal act upon property in the person's possession; or
 - b. Is intended to or is reasonably likely to intimidate the person being solicited into responding affirmatively to the solicitation;
3. Continuing to solicit within five feet of the person being solicited after the person has made a negative response, if continuing the solicitation is:
 - a. Intended to or is likely to cause a reasonable person to fear imminent bodily harm or the commission of a criminal act upon property in the person's possession; or
 - b. Is intended to or is likely to intimidate the person being solicited into responding affirmatively to the solicitation;
4. Intentionally or recklessly blocking the safe or free passage of the person being solicited or requiring the person, or the driver of a vehicle, to take evasive action to avoid physical contact with the person making the solicitation;
5. Intentionally or recklessly using words:
 - a. Intended to or likely to cause a reasonable person to fear imminent bodily harm or the commission of a criminal act upon property in the person's possession; or
 - b. Intended or likely to intimidate the person into responding affirmatively to the solicitation; or
6. Approaching the person being solicited in a manner that is:
 - a. Intended to or is likely to cause a reasonable person to fear imminent bodily harm or the commission of a criminal act upon property in the person's possession; or
 - b. Intended to or is likely to intimidate the person being solicited into responding affirmatively to the solicitation.

AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE

A device, linked to a financial institution's account records, which is able to carry out transactions, including but not limited to account transfers, deposits, cash withdrawals, balance inquiries, and mortgage and loan payments.

BANKING ORGANIZATION

All banks, trust companies, private bankers, savings banks, industrial banks, safe deposit companies, savings and loan associations, credit unions and investment companies as defined in § 2 of the New York State Banking Law.

LICENSED CASHER OF CHECKS

Any individual, partnership, unincorporated association or corporation duly licensed by the New York State Superintendent of Banks to engage in business pursuant to the provisions of Article IX-A of the New York State Banking Law.

PARKING LOT

A municipal parking lot as defined in Chapter 243 of the Municipal Code.

PUBLIC PLACE

Any area or building owned, leased, operated or controlled by or on behalf of any government, municipality, public authority or public corporation in the City which is generally accessible by the public, including but not limited to any street, including the sidewalk portion thereof, bridge, tunnel, park, playground, recreation area, cemetery, school or school grounds, building, facility, driveway, parking lot, and the doorways and entrances to buildings and dwellings.

SOLICIT

Shall include, without limitation, the spoken, written, or printed word or such other acts or bodily gestures as are conducted in furtherance of the purposes of immediately obtaining money or any other thing of value

- C. No person shall solicit in an aggressive manner in a public place.
- D. No person shall solicit within 20 feet of an automated teller machine or an entrance or exit of an automated teller machine during the time the automated teller machine is available for customers' use; or within 20 feet of an entrance or exit to a banking organization or a licensed casher of checks during its business hours.
- E. No person shall solicit when either the person soliciting or the person being solicited is in a bus shelter or at a bus stop.
- F. No person shall solicit in a parking lot.
- G. No person shall solicit in any portion of a tunnel or covered walkway.
- H. No person on a sidewalk or alongside a roadway shall solicit from any occupant of a motor vehicle that is on a street or other public place.
- I. Penalties. A violation of this section shall be a "violation" as that term is defined in the Penal Law. A person convicted of violating this section shall be subject to a fine as set forth in the fee and fine schedule set by the City staff (Or adopted by a resolution of the City Council) and may, for a second conviction within 12 months of a preceding conviction, be imprisoned for a term not to exceed 15 days. In lieu of a fine, the court may impose an appropriate alternative sentence; provided, however, that an alternative sentence shall not be an unconditional discharge.
- J. Severability. If any provision of this section is declared invalid or unconstitutional for any reason, the remaining provisions shall be severable and shall continue in full force and effect.

Alternate for I.

Penalties. A violation of this section shall be a "violation" as that term is defined in the Penal Law. A person convicted of violating this section shall be fined not less than \$50 nor more than \$500, and, in addition, for a second conviction within 12 months of a preceding conviction, may be imprisoned for a term not longer than

15 days. In lieu of a fine, the court may impose an appropriate alternative sentence; provided, however, that an alternative sentence shall not be an unconditional discharge.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Petropoulos; seconded by Clr. Pealer

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

ROLL CALL VOTE: **Aye - Clr. Whitfield. Clr, Moracco, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Pealer, Clr. Lavin, Mayor Valentino**

Nay - Clr. Brennan

MOTION CARRIED (7-1, 1 absent)

17. **RESOLUTION** – Approving Participation in the 2025 Ontario County Fire Service Mutual Aid Plan

Chief Parrotta presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Ontario County Fire Service Mutual Aid Plan was originally adopted in 1958 and has since been revised in 1988, 2008, and most recently in 2025; and

WHEREAS, the Ontario County Fire Coordinator, in collaboration with the Ontario County Fire Advisory Board and the Public Safety Committee of the Ontario County Board of Supervisors, has developed and approved an updated Mutual Aid Plan for 2025 to ensure coordinated, efficient, and effective emergency response across the County; and

WHEREAS, the updated Plan outlines standardized procedures, communications, incident management, and mutual support protocols for fire departments in Ontario County, as required by New York State General Municipal Law Section 209; and

WHEREAS, the Geneva Fire Department has reviewed the 2025 Mutual Aid Plan and supports the continued participation in this cooperative framework for emergency assistance; and

WHEREAS, this Plan, upon adoption, becomes part of the New York State Fire Mobilization and Mutual Aid Plan, thereby enabling the City of Geneva to request or provide assistance in accordance with state-wide protocols;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Geneva City Council hereby authorizes the City of Geneva and the Geneva Fire Department to participate in the 2025 Ontario County Fire Service Mutual Aid Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva agrees to comply with the provisions and attachments of the Plan, and affirms that no restrictions exist against outside service by the Geneva Fire Department within the meaning of New York State General Municipal Law §209; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution shall be filed with the Ontario County Fire Coordinator's Office to confirm the City of Geneva's formal participation.

Councilor Lavin wondered what the term of the plan is. Chief Parrotta explained that the term is indefinite, until the County revises it. He also noted that municipalities can withdraw at any time, but will not be eligible to receive mutual aid any longer, should they choose not to participate.

ACTION TAKEN by Mayor Valentino; seconded by Clr. Lavin

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

18. RESOLUTION – Commencing Chapter 111 Enforcement – 314-316 Castle Street

City Attorney Hou presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, a resolution was duly adopted by the City Council of the City of Geneva on the 4th day of June, 2025, calling for a Public Hearing to be held by the City of Geneva on the 2nd day of July, 2025, at the City of Geneva City Hall, 47 Castle Street, Geneva, New York, at 7:00 P.M., to hear all interested parties regarding the designation of the building at 314-316 Castle Street (the “Building”) as an unsafe structure and ordering its repair ore demolition pursuant to Geneva Municipal Code Chapter 111; and

WHEREAS, notice of said Public Hearing was duly served and advertised in accordance with law; and

WHEREAS, said Public Hearing was duly held at the City Hall on the 2nd day of July, 2025, at 7:00 P.M., and all parties in attendance were permitted an opportunity to speak on behalf of or in opposition to the designation of the Building as being unsafe and the ordering of its repair or demolition; and

WHEREAS, all testimony and evidence submitted by any interested parties have been made a part of the record of these proceedings and have been considered by City Council; and

WHEREAS, said proposed action is a Type II action for the purposes of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and therefore requires no further environmental review; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council hereby makes the following findings:

1. The City Council has reviewed the enforcement file of the Superintendent of Building & Zoning, including the Notices of Unsafe Building, related correspondence, and photographs between the City and the owner, Shree Muni, LLC and/or its agents (the “Owner”).
2. The Building was the subject of a fire that occurred on May 10, 2022, and has been unsecured and exposed to the elements since that time.
3. The City Code Enforcement Office investigated the Building and reported that it is unsafe.
4. The City provided a Notice of Unsafe Building to the Owner on September 25, 2024, in accordance with Chapter 111, advising the Owner that the Building is unsafe, and requiring the submission of a satisfactory plan for the repair or removal of the Building.
5. Photographs in the enforcement file depict unsafe conditions at the Property, including but not limited to the east block potential to collapse on the neighboring driveway; south block wall bordering Castle St. not supported, potential to fall towards the sidewalk; vegetation growing from the concrete floor creating weakened floor members; framing members completely compromised; and the south block wall bordering Castle Street to supported with potential to fall towards the sidewalk.
6. The Owner has failed to provide a satisfactory plan for the repair or removal of the Building within ninety days as is required by Chapter 111-4.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon consideration of the testimony and submissions in this proceeding, City Council hereby designates the Building at 314-316 Castle Street as an unsafe structure, and hereby ORDERS that the owner shall repair or demolish the Building no later than August 1, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, pursuant to Chapter 111-5(B) and (C), in the event the Building is not repaired or removed by August 1, 2025, the City Manager is authorized to arrange for the repair or demolition of the Building in accordance with the City's standard policies for procuring public work, and all costs and expenses incurred by the City in connection with these proceedings, including legal fees, to repair or demolish the Building, shall constitute a lien against the land upon which the Building is located and shall be added onto the next tax roll to be filed.

City Attorney Hou explained that council may change the date to comply, and if no action is taken by the deadline, the City Manager will be authorized to hire someone to do the work for the owner. Costs including legal and consulting will be added to the property's tax lien. Councilor Moracco wondered if August 1st is the date the property owner needs to begin or complete work. City Attorney How explained that the demolition or repair would need to be completed by August 1st to avoid City action, and reminded council that they can choose a different deadline. He also explained that the City Manager can use her judgement, and if she sees the owners making progress, she can put a hold on the City's process. Councilor Petropoulos shared that he believes the property owners have had plenty of time to demolish or repair the building, noting resident's safety concerns. Mayor Valentino stated that the City has lived with this long enough, the property owners have had lots of time, noting that he's fine with the August 1 deadline. Councilor Brennan asked the City Manager to have Code strictly follow timelines, and keep the pressure on.

ACTION TAKEN by Cllr Pealer; seconded by Cllr. Gillotte
MOVED THAT this resolution be approved
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

19. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Gillotte shared that the Police Budget Advisory Board didn't meet, as coordinating schedules has been challenging. They will meet next week. BID's upcoming events include First Fridays on July 4, Paddle Fest on July 5, which will be fully accessible this year, Art Walk on July 12 for Ironman Weekend, and Music Mondays on July 14 at Bicentennial Park.

Councilor Petropoulos shared that the LDC met today, and will be funding several little projects including the Hildreth Hill Neighborhood Pumpkin Roll. The next Neighbors Together meeting is on August 5, 6:45-8:00pm at the Bozzuto Center. A new parks group is working to add Adirondak chairs, a trash bin, a mini library, dog station, picnic table, and a gaga ball pit to Richards Park, the LDC is helping to fund some of these items. There is an online neighborhood survey about the park and what neighbors want to see there. There will be a free concert at the Simth on July 5th featuring the 198th Army Band.

Councilor Moracco shared that the Dunkin project hit a snag with an unmarked Verizon duct. Work has resumed, and is on target to open sometime in 2025. Cook Properties has completed the Phase I study, and is moving on to Phase II, the City will work with them on that study.

Councilor Whitfield shared that he felt disheartened hearing Mr. Linger say that the wrong mix of people will be moving into the Lakeview project. He explained that mental health is real, and people deal with it on a daily basis. He explained that the people Mr. Linger refers to are members of our community. And there are people who need affordable housing, noting an 18% homeless rate in the City. He was also disheartened to hear comments that no one goes to Richards Park, recalling growing up that park was a meeting ground for kids to come together to play basketball with each other from different parts of town. He apologized on behalf of Council for the exchange that happened during public comment that a child was present to witness, noting that as leaders council should be aware of who's watching and refrain in certain situations, allowing residents their three minutes to speak. Councilor Whitfield also shared that summer rec still has a few openings, the Serpents are home next week, and soccer has started.

Councilor Pealer shared that the Planning Board met, and that fiery overwhelming public comment was against the Finger Lakes Times building project, noting that he agrees with them. He clarified that he's not opposed to mental health treatment, there has been no movement on SEQR and that public comment is still open. He corrected Councilor Whitfield, as the city's poverty rate is 18%, not it's homeless rate. Councilor Pealer then recalled an aggressive panhandling encounter at his house recently where an individual approached him as he was leaving for work. He shared that he felt intimidated, and that the neighbors know exactly who the individual who approached him is. He explained that there will be a lot more of that downtown with the Lakeview project, and wondered how that would be beneficial for residents or tourists.

Councilor Lavin shared that in September Council will get a budget and have a month to look at it. He gives the City Manager credit for open advances in her approach. He also explained that the city does it backwards, adding to the load from the year before, and lamented that some residents won't be addressed because of the way the city budgets, and reiterated his goal of reducing the levy by 10%, and recommends being more aggressive with the town and adjusting spending to meet goals. Councilor Lavin explained that he would like to have macro discussions with the community now, before it's time to adopt the budget. He expressed concern for seniors pushed out, giving their homes away to investors and Airbnb's. He would also like to see council take on more aggression with water and sewer taxes and make things more equitable, explaining that there will be a group of councilors pushing things forward. He complemented city services, and explained that he'd like to see expanded fire boundaries and have others pay, and have a similar model for water and sewer. Councilor Lavin expanded to say the city doesn't get paid enough for neighbors to build, and the city needs to be pushier in a loving way. He committed to push Mark Venuti and his council, explaining that we can fight and be civil at the same time, disagree and learn. He further stated that he doesn't want to sit here in September arguing about a plow truck, and shared that there will be something in the paper soon that several councilors have signed on to.

Councilor Brennan shared that the Historic Districts Commission didn't meet last month. The Zoning Board of Appeals did meet, and is wrestling with the 1019 Lochland Road issue, with nothing settled. The Shade Tree Committee met and is going about their business as they always do. Tom Burrall donated \$435 in firewood sales this month, bringing his total donations to \$16,002. Councilor Brennan explained that he voted nay on the panhandling ordinance because it's impractical or impossible to enforce. Short Term Rentals came up with a fair license price that Council is pretty happy with, but Councilor Brennan noted that almost 50% of the city's short-term rentals are operating with no license, creating lost revenue. Councilor Brennan explained that non-compliant owners have been notified. City Attorney Hou spoke to the enforcement side of implementation of code. He explained that code will write tickets, which go to the City Attorney to take to court. How the matter is adjudicated will depend on if the owners appear in court, and what the judge does. Councilor Brennan acknowledged that Council needs to be coconscious of enforcement when writing

legislation. He also said he'd be interested in learning the value of the missing licenses, which the City Manager will have for him at the next meeting. Councilor Brennan wondered if there is a sewer agreement with the Town of Fayette. City Manager Hendrix explained that everyone is waiting for the rate study to see who wants to opt in. Fayette has indicated that they want to participate.

Mayor Valentino thanked Buildings and Grounds for the median work by Lakefront Park, and thanked the City Manager for putting up with Council. Mayor Valentino recalled the shared services meeting that Councilor Gillotte attended, as an open productive dialogue, not demanding and drawing lines in the sand. He wished everyone a happy Fourth of July and encouraged attendance at the Fireman's Parade on July 12. In response to Mr. Linger's inquiry, the Lakeview Council meeting in March was just information sharing, and not something they had to do, no decisions were made. Mayor Valentino also addressed an upcoming newspaper article on budgeting for 2026. He encourages council to have intelligent conversations about shared services and to understand implementation plans, while building friendships instead of walls.

20. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION TAKEN by Clr. Gillotte; seconded by Clr. Petropoulos
MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:57pm
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Nicole Tillotson
City Clerk