

**From April 21 meeting:**

**1. Council President Tom Schuster asked the following question:**

**a. Mr. Schuster asked, per city resident John Pocius, the following queries regarding 5B on the evening agenda related to the one-way street change legislation for the 3100 Block of Cedar Avenue.**

**i. Why was the report done by the city and city engineer not the developer of the project?**

1. The issue of a traffic study of the block of Cedar Avenue adjacent to the church was raised before the apartment land development was submitted. The concern at the time was that the narrow street with two-way traffic and parking on both sides potential safety concern. The size of the apartment building accessing the street does not typically warrant a traffic study. The city engineer typically performs small traffic studies as part of their normal scope when requests come from the administration or originate with council or citizen issues.

**ii. Regarding the affected Divine Mercy Church location and parking lot. Mr. Pocius indicated motorists moving north on Cedar Avenue to Crane Street cannot move straight to Davis Street. When taking the new route, drivers will notice that a time saving shortcut through the church parking lot, allowing for a very quick bypass to Davis Street. Will additional signage or something to prevent vehicles from using the church parking lot and driveways be considered to control illegal bypass of the one-way street?**

1. City engineers will recommend adding “private lot, no cut through signage.” They discussed the issue with the Pastor, Fr. Paul McDonnell, and he noted that cut through is currently an issue in the opposite direction from Davis Street where motorists are attempting to avoid a backup at the traffic signal at Birney Avenue. We also note that the northbound traffic from Cedar has options to use Eagen Street or Murphy Court to access Davis Street.

**iii. Further, funerals at the church enter using Davis Street where the hearse and family vehicles park facing Cedar Avenue, then making a left turn to exit. This will now be prohibited, and funerals will now make a right turn on Cedar Ave, right turn to Crane Street and on to Davis Street. Was this considered as part of the traffic study?**

1. City engineers discussed the funeral procession route change with Fr. McDonnell. Father said that he expected that the funeral directors could adapt to the revised route. He said he has a concern that the current two-way traffic on Cedar Ave. with parking during events at the church creates a safety issue should there be the need for emergency access to

the Church or the neighborhood south of the church. The one-way traffic eliminates that traffic conflict when it is changed to one way.

**iv. Mr. Pocius indicated that the study is not signed, sealed and dated on the cover sheet by the professional engineer that prepared the report to allow direct supervision over the report. Please advise if this report provided with the legislation is the final document.**

1. The traffic study sent to the city for review and use by the Law Department was signed sealed by Paul Menichello and dated. See attached.

**v. A minor but somewhat notable error is the spelling in the study as Devine Mercy Parish versus the correct Divine Mercy Parish.**

1. We realize that the church name is not referring to mercy for the former Notre Dame Football Coach Dan Devine and we will correct the spelling. Fr. Paul who is an ND fan pointed out this frequent spelling mix up.

**vi. Mr. Schuster asked when the City Planning Commission or Zoning approved the one-way street change in conjunction with the multi-unit apartment building plan?**

1. The planning commission did not approve a one-way change since it is not their role to approve street issues. The status of the street did become an issue in the review of the Land Development since maintaining two-way traffic would require additional parking spaces be eliminated to allow sight distance in both directions from the apartment driveway. City engineers note that there is a concern in the neighborhood of parking overflow from the proposed apartments. Eliminating parking on one side of the street in this block to facilitate two-way traffic would also be much worse for the available parking and was not a recommended course of action.

**vii. Mr. Schuster asked if the s-shape, serpentine that will be needed to navigate the neighborhood be considered for a change for access to Birney, Eagan, and Grimes Avenues?**

1. City engineers do not recommend additional changes at this time. They recommend that impacts of the change be monitored after implemented to assess if any added changes are recommended later.

**b. Additional questions posed by Council President Schuster were:**

- i. Mr. Schuster asked if the city administration may provide the Council with any available plans for the West Scranton Gateway Project.**

1. Please see the attached approved highway permit plans.
  
- ii. **Mr. Schuster thanked the administration regarding any info provided on the PennDOT project to make Euclid Avenue one-way at the project site. He did ask what consideration was given to Emiliani Trucking Company at the end of Dorothy Street as there is a feeling that the change to the one-way may be detrimental to this over 90-year, family owned, trucking company. Mr. Schuster asked how the quoted 150 foot line of sight is determined and how does changing the street to a one-way comply with PennDOT?**
  1. The 150 ft. line of sight is the minimum in the PennDOT Highway Occupancy manual for access to state roads from local roads and private driveways. It is measured from 10 ft beyond the edge of the through-road traffic. The steel columns of the railroad overpass that are located at the curb line of Main Ave. obstruct the sight distance for a vehicle looking to the left when exiting Euclid Avenue onto Main Avenue resulting in a 50 ft. distance which is one-third the minimum standard. The design development and PennDOT permitting process included reviewing the sight distance issue. Farr Street intersection at Main Avenue has adequate sight distance in each direction. We will review the Emiliani Trucking access issue and report back.
  
- iii. **Mr. Schuster asked if Council may have a copy of the Complete Streets Policy Review as shown under the April 22, 2026, City Planning Commission meeting agenda.**
  1. The Complete Streets Policy is being considered by the Planning Commission to propose to the council for adoption. It is about making any new or renovated street project more friendly to the environment and all forms of transport. At the Planning Commission meeting last week, they agreed to have members of the Commission edit the draft more before they send it to Council as a comprehensive plan for general guidance. The policy would only have a binding effect if Council then revised several road- and development-related ordinances.
  
- iv. **Regarding the Controller's Report ending March 31, 2026, under Item 3E on the evening agenda, Mr. Schuster stated the below and asked the questions:**
  1. **Prior to the purchase of the Fidelity Building next door that it was his fear this year that we were overextending ourselves with the size of government in Scranton. When looking at this report for the first quarter, we're short \$1.2 million. Going back, as far as I've been on Council, we've always had more revenue than we've had expenditures. Going back to 2021, we were plus \$27 million. 2023, we were \$9.4**

**million over, 2024, we were \$1.3 million, in 2025, we were about \$555,000 over. At this point in time, in the first quarter, we're running a little short. He stated that it's the first time in his tenure on Council that we're running short for the first quarter and just wanted to ask if we could ask the city Business Administration; are we projecting any shortfalls this year or please advise any concerns that we have?**

- a. We are not projecting any shortfalls.
- b. As of 4/23/26 the City's collected YTD operating budget revenues are \$42,148,472.57. In contrast, the City collected 2025 April operating budget revenues in the amount of \$40,365,677.06. Thus, through 4/23/26, the City has collected \$1,782,795 more operating budget revenue than through April 2025.
- c. As of 4/23/26 the City's 2026 YTD revenues exceed 2026 YTD expenses by \$14,832,482.87. In contrast, the City's 2025 April YTD revenues exceeded 2025 April YTD expenses by \$9,125,839.53. Thus, the City's 2026 YTD surplus through 4/23/26 is greater than through April 2025.

**2. Mr. Schuster asked for clarification, per resident Joan Hodowanitz request, on two-line items under Non-Departmental Expenditures. The Homeless Outreach Initiative, \$31,000. and Hunger Initiative, \$31,000. The only money expended for the Homeless Outreach Initiative was in 2025. They were budgeted for \$15,000 and they expended \$8,600. Please advise who controls these expenditures? Is it the task force or is it someone else within the administration?**

- a. The administration works with the Unsheltered Task Force and the Hunger Task Force to determine best use of funds on an annual basis.

**2. Councilman Sean McAndrew asked the below questions:**

- a. **Councilman McAndrew realizes the city response received on 4/21 indicated SFD Chief John Judge advised that he would meet with the City Council Chair or Co-Chair for Public Safety. However, Mr. McAndrew would like to meet with SFD Chief Judge regarding city emergency services, specifically ambulance service. He would also like to take meeting minutes to allow for clear and concise reporting back to concerned residents.**
  - i. We have requested an update from Fitch and Associates regarding ambulance services in the City.

**b. Mr. McAndrew asked for an update on the projected city pool openings as of this date. Seeing that Connell Park had numerous issues in 2025, may the city Parks & Rec Department confirm if repairs were done and ready for a scheduled opening?**

- i. Connell pool ran very smoothly last year. On the occasion we did close the pool, it was for maintenance that every pool needs given that 200+ patrons visit the pool daily. Additionally, maintenance can cover anything from cleaning patron biohazards, downpours that wash debris into pools, buildup of sunscreen which leaves a film on the elements, to chemical systems that need to be reprogrammed after a storm, or to repair small leaks in older pipes. Connell Pool had repairs done to some older pipes in the fall without issue. The company that did the repairs will be meeting with the Parks Director to walk through their repairs and discuss any concerns Parks staff may have.

**3. Councilman Mark McAndrew asked the following:**

**a. Mr. McAndrew thanked the city administration for the April 21<sup>st</sup> response and numbers related to security at the Weston Field Complex. He asked if the city has a schedule or dedicated process where all parks are secured at night by who is responsible and possibly establish a checklist for city management and Council as the current process is not working.**

- i. Crowley Park is locked at dusk and unlocked at 6 a.m. by Marywood campus police.  
Sweeney Beach is locked by the Scranton Police Department at dusk and unlocked by Parks staff at approximately 7 a.m. during the three warmer seasons. During the winter, the road access gate is closed during the weekend because there are fewer people in the parks and weekend work requires overtime hours from Parks staff. Foot traffic can still go through, but cars cannot. Novembrino is locked at dusk at approximately 6 p.m. during the winter months and approximately 8 p.m. during summer months. The Parks Director will be coming back out to lock the park because Parks workers leave by 3 p.m. In the event that the Parks Director is unable to do so, the Director will allocate the responsibility to another individual.  
Weston Field back road gates will remain closed to cars so they cannot drive through the back gates. The parking lot will remain open because there are sports that occur on the fields in the evening, and they will still need access to parking and the field. We are looking into natural barriers to prevent cars from driving onto the field from the parking lot.  
SPD provided information last week on 52 “incidents” at Weston Field. Building checks happen any time the alarm shows for any reason, include a cleaning person arriving and not turning off the alarm in time, a fire alarm that needed to be reset, etc. The other incidents were related to the removal of Code Blue individuals from the building, which were also the reason for two of the four

cases that SPD provided information about.

**b. Councilman McAndrew asked if city management may revisit the condemned property at 19 Fawnwood Drive for possible demolition in 2026. Property had been condemned over two years with no further Code Enforcement action.**

- i. The property at 19 Fawnwood Drive is scheduled for review by the Housing Appeals Board at its upcoming meeting on May 27, 2026. The case will be considered as part of the Board's agenda, where any pending appeals or enforcement actions related to the condemnation will be addressed. At this time, the property remains in condemned status. We will continue to monitor the outcome of the Board's review and will provide further updates as they become available.

**4. Council member Dr. Jessica Rothchild inquired:**

**a. Dr. Rothchild asked for a status and review from city management of the condemned property at 1610 Roselyn Street in the Hill Section. She understood that the property was on a prior listing for demolition and now on hold due to possible legal or historical designation.**

- i. The property at 1610 Roselynn Street is currently included on the demolition list; however, its priority score remains below that of other, more pressing properties. This prioritization helps ensure that available funding is allocated in alignment with the highest-need demolition cases.  
At this time, the Blight/Rehabilitation Coordinator is continuing to investigate the property for potential inclusion in the next round of demolition projects. We will provide additional updates as more information becomes available.