

THE GENEVA CITY COUNCIL

JOURNAL OF PROCEEDINGS

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

January 7, 2026 – 7:00 PM
City Hall – 2nd Floor Council Chambers
47 Castle Street
Geneva, NY 14456

Presiding – Jim Cecere, Mayor

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

MOVED THAT Council move to executive session at 6:04pm to discuss collective negotiations, and the proposed sale of real property.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

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

MOVED THAT council exit executive session at 6:57pm

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Clr. Brennan, Clr. Kaim, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Lavin, Clr. Gummoe, Clr. Grimaldi

Absent: Clr. Whitfield

3. AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

Mayor Cecere amended the agenda to remove the Resolution supporting the Sale of Surplus Real Estate Parcel Located at 32 Middle Street

4. PUBLIC HEARING - Sale of City Owed Property -32 Middle Street

Mayor Cecere opened the public hearing at 7:08pm. With no comment offered at this time, he closed the public hearing at 7:09pm.

5. PUBLIC HEARING - Change in Use for Loomis Woods from City Park and Recreation Area to Sale for Housing

Mayor Cecere opened the public hearing at 7:09pm

Vicky Davis of Carter Road provided the following comment:

First and foremost, I would like to state I am opposed to any change in use of Loomis Park to sale for housing. My reasons for this opposition are as follows: First, the deed to the city states, quote "To be used as a park and playground for the City of Geneva, and to be known as Loomis Park. This gift is made as a memorial to," end quote and it names two Loomis children. The city accepted the deed and it has hence forth been known as Loomis Park. On March 2, 2021 the city passed a resolution which I will now read a part of. Now, therefore, this council under the leadership of Mayor Steve Valentino respectfully wishes to preserve this 15-acre property as open space/parkland

and wishes to reject any attempts to materially modify, rezone, sell or remove the perpetual local deed restriction that the Loomis Family has attached to this property. The resolution passed by 8 to 1. I repeat, the council wishes to reject any attempts to materially modify, rezone, sell or remove the perpetual local deed restriction. I have copies of these documents if anyone should wish to see them. These are 2 legal reasons to oppose any change to Loomis Park. The third eloquently and informatively stated by Jackie Augstine in last night's Finger Lakes Times. Second, this is a much-used park. I have seen many children being led through the many trails in the park. I have seen dog walkers and joggers. I myself find it to be a very relaxing space in the midst of living in a multi school zone. And while I may be wrong, I do not believe there is any place else in the city where one can experience woods. On one trek through these woods, I discovered a fairy house. How magical this must be for a child to find! I spent many of my childhood days in woods such as these. I would have been shocked, amazed and excited to find a fairy house. I have traversed the entire woods, both on and off trails without problems. I say this because I have balance issues and I fully expected I would wind up on the ground at some point, but I did not. Third, I bought my house just over a year and a half ago. I was looking in Geneva and Canandaigua. Overwhelmingly, the deciding factor for me was that these woods had been declared forever wild. My house needed much updating and if I had not been assured in good faith that these woods would be forever wild, I would not have purchased the property and I would be spending my money in Canandaigua, not Geneva. If the usage of this park is changed, I would consider legal remedies. Fourth, when the articles from the Finger Lakes Times were posted on Facebook, the overwhelming opinions expressed were to LEAVE IT ALONE! In conclusion, these are just a few of the many reasons the use of these woods should not be changed. In regards to selling these woods, there are many more reasons against that but my understanding is that this hearing is about changing the usage. Again, I oppose any change to Loomis Park.

Christine Hoffman of North Brook Street shared that she is opposed to the change in use of Loomis Woods. She cited the fact that the space is used for students, and is a rare unspoiled ecosystem in the city limits. She recalled the annual Pumpkin Walk through the woods as well, calling the space priceless parkland that the donors intended to be forever wild. Ms. Hoffman shared that she is forming the Friends of Loomis Woods Committee, and you can contact her at chrismhoffman12@gmail.com to join.

George Fairfax of North Brook Street explained that Loomis Woods is a five-minute walk from his house, and learned about the park while he was a student at the North Street School. He recalls being part of a "gang of young men" riding bicycles, finding the woods to be a fascinating and educational place for young boys to explore. Mr. Fairfax shared that he is against changing the configuration as it stands now. He believes the park can be improved and should be available to the community, especially young children. In closing he stated that this public park land shouldn't be used as a financial resource to save money.

Geoff Hellauer Geiger agreed that Geneva needs affordable housing, but isn't in favor of selling Loomis Woods to a speculative developer, as it was given to the city as permanent park land. He noted that this land has served the community for over 100 years, and is part of the city's culture and heritage. He recalled Aurthur Dove spending time in those woods, that inspired his work. Mr. Hellauer Geiger called the offer of \$1million for this land shocking low and insulting, especially given that the private owner would be counting on a profit with no guarantee that homes would be affordable or serve current city residents. In closing Mr. Hellauer Geiger called on council to vote against any kind of change to Loomis Woods.

Anya Stansell provided the following comment to council:

My name is Anya and I moved to Geneva in 2022. I'd like to speak about Loomis woods. I didn't know about Loomis Woods until this autumn, when there was a Pumpkin Walk through the woods hosted by the North Street School. My husband and I took our one-year-old son through the trails lined with what seemed like hundreds of carved pumpkins. At the time, I thought we were walking through private school property, a one-time event to let visitors come by. I had no idea this was a park owned by the City of Geneva until this talk of selling it came about.

I went again this week. It's a 5-minute walk from my house—we live by the hospital. After reading the public discussion about Loomis woods, I had started imagining Loomis Woods as a small, overgrown thicket that no one

really visited. But when I entered the woods, I saw well-maintained foot bridges over two small creeks. I saw trails clearly lined with large fallen branches, easy to find even in inches of snow. Most importantly, I saw so many footprints, adults and children, and a snowman. This is clearly a well-stewarded forest that our children already know about and use. Now that I know it's public land, I hope to visit Loomis woods often with my son.

Professor McGowan is offering, as one option, a purchase of Loomis woods for \$750,000 and 22 acres of land—but I'm worried that this land won't be accessible by foot for me, or for the many kids who currently use Loomis Woods and can't drive themselves far across the city. There's no equivalent forest nearby. Especially when we think about the ecology—this wood is over 200 years old, and I think it is very valuable to children to understand what these old growth forests look like. We are losing them at alarming speed in favor of land development all across the state, and we can't get them back once they're gone. I also feel uncertain about who will steward that land Professor McGowan is offering. Loomis Woods is already a lovely, safe forest that doesn't need investment to become a worthwhile park. All Loomis Woods needs, in my opinion, is two things: To be listed as a site on Google Maps, so people can find it, and to be listed on the City of Geneva website as one of the city parks. Please don't destroy this woodland in favor of a housing project. Thank you.

Stephiae Hesler, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Geneva offered the following comment to council: The Boys & Girls Club of Geneva is aware of the ongoing discussions regarding the Loomis Woods property and the change in use proposals currently before City Council. Our organization's mission is to connect and empower all people in our community, especially young people who need us most, so they can reach their full potential.

Last year we were approached with an offer of donated land adjacent to our property. After careful consideration, we declined the offer because it did not align with our operational needs or long-term strategic plans.

As the City evaluates the future of Loomis Woods, we are not taking a position for or against the change in use proposal. We simply encourage a transparent process that considers the full range of community impacts, including youth development, environmental stewardship, and responsible land use. We remain committed to working collaboratively with all partners to ensure that decisions made today support the well-being of Geneva's young people and families in the future.

Sam Cosentino spoke in opposition of changing the use of Loomis Woods. He wondered how much city taxes would be reduced by selling this property. He also recalled residents being affected by flooding nearby from over development, and the Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District working to find a solution. Mr. Cosentino shared that there was a solution until the proposed buyer of this land pulled out. In closing Mr. Cosentino wondered what the city would have to pay for flooding management of the area.

Kathy Cosentino of Carter Road Extension spoke in opposition of the change in use of Loomis Woods. She shared that she has lived on Carter Road most of her adult life, noting that as other woodlands have been developed, Loomis Woods is the only woodland still remaining. She called it a sad day should the woods be torn down for development, noting that the deed states the land was a gift with restrictions that it be known as Loomis Park, and used for recreation.

Paul Cosentino of Carter Road Extension spoke in opposition of changing the use and sale of Loomis Woods, explaining that he understood the woods to be park land forever by gift. Mr. Cosentino has observed the woods getting use on a nearly daily basis, with no expenses to the city or taxpayers to maintain the park thus far. Mr. Cosentino wondered where the 22 acres of parkland would be added to replace Loomis Woods, and about the DEC wetlands on the site. He also expressed concern around legal and staff fees for change in use and wondered how this would change what tax payers currently pay.

Carol Cosentino, of Carter Road shared that her backyard puts up to Loomis Woods, and is opposed to the proposed change in use. She explained that the land was donated in memory of the Loomis family, and is used by the community daily. Ms. Cosentino called the proposed change in use disturbing, immoral, and illegal under New York State law. She explained that Loomis Woods are used for recreation, and home to wildlife including

endangered owls. She reminded council that the land was donated to children, families, and future generations, and the city was trusted to honor those commitments. In closing Ms. Cosentino called Loomis Woods a public asset.

Martin Goffinet of County Road 6, introduced himself as a retired botanist, who has served on the Shade Tree Committee and Arboretum Association. He shared his thoughts on the value of Loomis Woods, which may appear to be neglected and out of the way, explaining that is exactly what users enjoy about this park, as it promotes contemplation, at time away from the hustle and bustle.

Corrine Connolley, a fifth-grade teacher and outdoor school summer teacher shared how students learn in Loomis Woods, including learning to identify trees by their bark. Ms. Connolley also explained that there are several ways to maintain the woods, if needed including with help from HWS, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

Henry Augustine, of Washington Street wondered if the opportunities Loomis Woods bring have been explored, calling this a crossroads, where we need to be careful. He sees this as an opportunity for the city to make a stand about what makes Geneva special, uniquely urban, and any motion to use Loomis Woods for anything besides parkland is not part of that vision. He called for preservation of this land for the public good.

Alexander Kelley provided the following comments for the record:

The previous mayor's resolution in 2021 on this matter expressing his 5 wishes holds no legal weight here and is something straight out of an "I Dream of Jeanie" episode.

Joey Citizen has been following this very closely since 2021 and did his homework. The previous mayor tried to get Geneva to buy something with his non-kosher paperwork tactics and creative language.

A poorly executed and uneducated decision 5 years ago is negatively impacting our entire community today.

A city's expression of a wish to keep land as open space is policy preference, not law.

By saying "wish", the City avoids:

- Creating a legally enforceable trust;
- Locking itself in permanently;
- Judicial scrutiny for ultra vires dedication.

It:

Does not create a public trust;

Does not impose a legal restriction;

Does not bind future councils;

Does not substitute for legislative alienation approval.

In property and trust law, courts draw a bright line between:

- Mandatory language → "shall," "must," "upon condition that," "so long as," "in trust for"
- Precatory language → "wish," "hope," "desire," "request," "it is my intention"

A donor's wish:

Does not create a restriction;

Does not limit the estate;

Does not create a trust;

Does not bind successors.

Courts view this as aspirational, not operative.

People in the comments and the latest columnists article argue that legislative approval is required because the Property is subject to the public trust doctrine. That argument fails.

Legislative approval applies only where land is validly dedicated and accepted as parkland. Here, the Property was never dedicated or accepted, and a five-year-old City resolution merely expressing a wish cannot retroactively create a trust.

Notably, the City took NO action for 111 years and only adopted the resolution after a developer expressed interest in purchasing the land for housing, showing the City's action was reactive, not reflective of any longstanding municipal intent.

The Property remains ordinary municipal land, freely alienable WITHOUT LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL!

Point 1.

This land was NEVER validly dedicated or accepted as parkland:

Public trust status requires clear donor intent and timely municipal acceptance (Glick v. Harvey, 25 N.Y.3d 1175 [2015]; Avella v. City of New York, 29 N.Y.3d 425 [2017]).

The deed conveyed fee simple title with no trust language, condition, or reverter. The donor's (Loomis') expression that the land should remain open space was precatory, a wish, and legally unenforceable.

For 111 years, the City neither maintained, managed, nor opened the land to the public. Acceptance cannot be implied after more than a century of inaction.

Point 2.

Legislative approval is NOT REQUIRED and the walking / pumpkin rolling trail does not at all establish parkland status:

Legislative approval is required ONLY if municipal land is subject to the public trust (Friends of Van Cortlandt Park v. City of New York, 95 N.Y.2d 623 [2001]; Avella v. City of New York, 29 N.Y.3d 425 [2017]). The Property here was never dedicated or accepted.

Commenters point to a walking trail as evidence of public access. This is legally insufficient. Mere existence of a trail does not demonstrate municipal acceptance or create a public trust (Glick v. Harvey, 25 N.Y.3d 1175 [2015]; Williams v. Gallatin, 229 N.Y. 248 [1920]).

Courts require clear intent, affirmative acceptance, and active stewardship, none of which occurred here over the preceding 111 years. At most, a trail shows incidental access, which cannot retroactively convert decades of municipal neglect into legally dedicated parkland.

The trail does not convert 111 years of neglected land into parkland; the City only acted when development interest arose. Courts require clear intent and active municipal acceptance to trigger the public trust.

Point 3.

The city's resolution language in 2021 is precatory, mere wishes of Loomis and the ex mayor and NOT BINDING: The City's five-year-old resolution states only that it 'wishes' to preserve the land. Aspirational language cannot create a public trust or retroactively trigger legislative approval (Avella v. City of New York, 131 A.D.3d 77, aff'd 29 N.Y.3d 425). The City cannot cure 111 years of non-acceptance with a last-minute resolution.

Point 4.

Retroactive trust creation is impermissible:

A municipality CANNOT retroactively impose a public trust to block development (Avella v. City of New York, 131 A.D.3d 77 [1st Dept 2015], aff'd 29 N.Y.3d 425 [2017]).

The City sat on the Property for 111 years without improvement, public use, or designation. The late resolution cannot manufacture legislative approval obligations.

Accepting such a theory would allow municipalities to freeze land indefinitely, contrary to settled law (Friends of Van Cortlandt Park v. City of New York, 95 N.Y.2d 623 [2001]; Brooklyn Park Commrs. v. Armstrong, 45 N.Y. 234).

The issue now is whether legislative approval is required to sell or redevelop this Property. Legislative approval is necessary only if the land is legally held as parkland under the public trust doctrine. Here, it is clearly not.

The Property was never legally dedicated, never accepted, and the trail and resolution cannot change that.

Legislative approval is therefore unnecessary, and the Property may be sold or redeveloped without further legislative action.

This needs to go through the motions and a court needs to issue a permanent injunction preventing the City from blocking, delaying, or otherwise interfering with the sale or redevelopment of the Property based on the resolution. WE NEED NEW HOUSES IN GENEVA IMMEDIATELY.

6. COUNCIL UPDATES

Councilor Brennan shared that the Zoning Board of Appeals didn't meet last month, and are exploring different training opportunities. The Shade Tree Committee continues to be active, and Tom Burrall donated \$875 from firewood sales last month. The Historic Districts Commission didn't meet.

Councilor Gillotte shared BID updates to include the introduction of Winterfest. Downtown and beyond will be transformed into a vibrant winter destination February 6-22, this two-week period will include Geneva Restaurant Week and a full city-wide calendar of events. Look for winter animal ice sculptures downtown and a Winter Carnival on Linden Street February 21st featuring music, food, animals, and family-friendly fun. The list of events is available on the Geneva BID website genevadowntown.com. Reach out to the BID for more info on how your business or non-profit can participate. After 17 years in their current location, the Geneva BID will be moving to their new home at 513 Exchange St. They will be fully moved in and ready for business by February 1st, stop in and say hello! The Police Budget Advisory Board will meet next week. Residents in Ward 4 can be added to an email list to be kept updated with factual information, to help combat the social media misinformation, reach out to Councilor Gillotte to sign up.

Councilor Grimaldi shared that the December Geneva Housing Authority meeting was a wrap up meeting. Water letters are getting straightened out, and the city is looking for lead pipes.

Councilor Lavin shared that the IDA didn't have a quorum in December, so they just had some discussion. Councilor Lavin explained that he will bring things up that need to be discussed about the way the IDA works. He has questions about how PILOT money is spent among other things.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Phillip Fleming, of Exchange Street, shared that the Geneva Human Rights Commission was founded in 1964 as part of a broader civil rights movement. The last time this group met was in 2022. Dr. Fleming believes that it is vital that the Geneva Human Rights Commission return given the state of affairs in the country. He suggested that the commission can advise the mayor and council on housing, education, human rights, and civil rights, noting a lot of room for collaboration.

Charles King, of Ward 2 shared the following comments with council:

Hi, I'm Charles King. I've lived in Ward 2 for 24 years. I'm a book editor and graphic designer. My wife is a mathematics professor at HWS.

We've raised three kids in Geneva. We also brought my in-laws up (this is my father-in-law here). I'm a member of the egg co-op, and am active in local theater and music. I was active in Geneva government from 2015 to 2023, serving on two city boards and an ad hoc committee. I have attended about a hundred city council meetings, and dozens of board meetings. Aside from my brief appearance in November, I haven't appeared before Council in a couple of years, so you are all fresh faces to me.

I'm going to talk about staggered terms and appointing people to powerful boards.

If you read my letter to the editor a couple of years ago, you know that I'm not a fan of Geneva's staggered terms; we had 247 fewer ballots this year than two years go, that's down by more than 10%. Election fatigue and constant campaigning are forms of voter suppression.

Elections are expensive in terms of both political capitol and real money. 3 out of 5 races this fall weren't contested. If you care about free and fair elections, you will seek to fix this in some way, either by repealing staggered terms or by moving to a different, fairer system.

You have about 3-4 months to address this if it will be solved by 2027.

Staggered terms was supposed to create stability but here we are two years later: 100% City Council turnover, more uncontested elections than contested, city clerk turnover (twice), city attorney turnover, chief of police turnover (twice), etc. Every even-numbered year is going to involve getting up to speed with new elected personnel and every odd numbered year is going to be a political campaign. That's not stability.

For board appointments, there are about two dozen volunteer board positions with significant policymaking power: the IDA, LDC, Planning Board, ZBA, and Board of Ethical Review. You have one for ZBA tonight.

Advisory-type boards and policy-making boards should probably be two different items on your agenda. You should not appoint or re-appoint any members to those five powerful boards without personally interviewing them and

reviewing their past involvement. Abstain if you haven't interviewed, or, ideally, table this appointment and all of you take a chance to interview this gentleman. Boards have been anti-transparency, untrained (I do appreciate Mr. Brennan's recent efforts at training), and concessionary in the past ten years, and if you simply appoint and reappoint members without individual review, you will be actively endorsing the past government's failed policies and you will not be representing a new direction for the city. With NY's ethical ex parte standards, Public Officers Law and your own Code of Ethics Tenet 15, interviews are the only time you'll be able to ethically talk to these people directly about policy before they go into quasi-judicial positions for the next three years; don't give up your only opportunity to share your vision for the city and interpretation of the charter with the people who will implement it.

You should each be responsible for recruiting one person per year to serve on one of these powerful volunteer boards; that would solve the City of Geneva government's (largely self-created) volunteer shortage.

When you vote someone onto one of those 5 boards, you should be required to state for the record whether you've interviewed them and reviewed their credentials. This is 8 key interviews per year that you should not be rubber stamping.

It takes three years to turn over boards, but with elected government changing every two years now, each Council will not have a chance to deliberately change the character of the infrastructure. Boards often ignore attendance rules, don't do state mandated trainings, don't hold annual meetings, don't elect officers, sometimes ignore the charter, are pro-lakefront development, use trickle down economic philosophy, ignore environmental issues, ignore election integrity issues, ignore finance issues, and ignore social issues. Sadly, it's: Develop at any cost:

Protect the status quo: Beggars can't be choosers. If those aren't your philosophies, you should be appointing different people or differently prepared people to boards. Please take board appointments seriously.

Rafel Diaz-Diaz expressed concerns of downtown business owners related to landscaping outside of businesses, specifically rocks that are not affixed to the ground that cause tripping hazards to customers and can be used to damage property or people. Recently someone picked up a rock and threw it at a patron outside of Esther Son's Kitchen. As damage could happen at any time, Mr. Diaz-Diaz is requesting that the city remove the rocks or affix them to the ground. He also shared that windows have been broken with them, and suggests something different to avoid danger.

Jackie Augustine of Washington Street offered congratulations to new and re-elected councilmembers. She shared some technical concerns with two resolutions on the agenda, explaining that she was happy to see the city weigh in on the NYCOM proposal on Bail Reform. She shared that both the Code of Ethics and Rules of Procedure were drafted many years ago by Councilor DeCastanzo and herself. She complimented the affirmation and signature statement, and shared that the initial Code of Ethics included a proposal about the actual composition of the Board of Ethical Review to include one attorney, one member of clergy, and one member with ethics training or human resources background, to make sure the board is professionally administered. She suggested restoring these requirements to restore some order and professionalism to the idea of the Board of Ethical Review. Related to transparency and improvements to the Rules of Procedure, she raised concerns about the addition of items C and D, Placement of items on the Agenda and Exceptions for Administrative or Emergency matters. She raised concerns that during the 30-day review period a lot of administrative work, and questions councilors might have would be conducted in that 30-day period, and outside of the public eye. She explained that presenting a resolution and getting a second on the floor achieves the same objective. She also raised concerns about exceptions that can be certified by the City Manager if the Mayor concurs, putting the City Manager in a role of having to affirm a council resolution to move it to the agenda if the Mayor concurs gives the mayor a pocket veto that isn't in the charter, giving Ms. Augustine some pause about transparency and accountability.

8. PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

9. CONSIDERATION OF MEETING MINUTES

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

MOVED THAT the minutes of the December 3, December 16, December 17 and December 23, 2025 Council Meetings be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

10. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Cecere shared details about an initial plan to create a strategic approach to what council is doing. Council will be holding a Strategic Planning session on January 14. Mayor Cecere also shared that he will form an ad hoc committee on Finance. He also provided a brief overview of resolutions to come on the agenda.

11. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Hendrix reviewed two unrelated mailing issues, with some property tax bills including incorrect penalty calculations, corrected bills will be going out soon to all affected property owners; there was a printing error on water service line letters, no action is required at this time unless the listed address is the property you own. Corrected letters will be mailed in the near future. Staff have reviewed both issues, one internal, and one with a vendor, and have come up with ways to reduce this risk in the future. The city has received notice that the County Infrastructure Grant that was awarded last year for the ATAD expansion will still be coming to the city despite the change in some housing projects that were tied into the funding. The city received a grant award for a Daylighting Castle Creek feasibility study. A second award is for the Geneva Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan, a 24-month project. The final seasonal debris pickup is now underway for Christmas trees. Pickup will resume in the spring. In the meantime, yard debris can still be dropped off at the Resource Recovery Park on Doran Ave. between 8:30 – 4:30 on Thursdays and Saturdays. City Manager Hendrix shared that there has been targeted enforcement of truck routes in the city, and provided education to truckers.

12. ORDINANCE – Second Reading of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 335 “Vehicles & Traffic” Municipal Code, Lower Washington Street
Chief Eveland presented the following Ordinance for a second reading:

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York that Chapter 335, entitled “Vehicles & Traffic” of the City of Geneva Municipal Code be amended:

WHEREAS, the current section 335-17, entitled “Parking standing and stopping restrictions.” Indicates No special parking restrictions for the south side of Lower Washington Street between the intersection of Park Place and Pulteney Streets in the City except for “No parking from the west curb line of Park Place to a point 60 feet westerly”, and

WHEREAS, the City Director of Public Works has determined that the northern boundaries of properties at 101 Washington Street though 117-119 Washington Street are the South Street Line of Washington Street, and

WHEREAS, the City Director of Public Works has determined that the sidewalks and “parking” areas adjoining the northern boundaries of the properties at 101 Washington Street though 117-119 Washington Street are within the bounds of Washington Street, and

WHEREAS, the City Director of Public Works has determined that the sidewalks and “parking” areas adjoining the northern boundaries of the properties at 101 Washington Street though 117-119 Washington Street are located on property belonging to the City, and

WHEREAS, the City Director of Public Works recommends a two-hour parking limit be enacted for the South Side of Washington Street from 101 Washington Street though 117-119 Washington Street, effectively named as the Washington Street Parking Lot, two hour parking only, effective Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and

WHEREAS, the current section of 335-24, entitled “Parking time limits in public parking lots” prescribes time limits for specified public parking lots, and

NOW THEREFORE IT IS ORDAINED, as follows

Section 335-24 of the Geneva City Code, entitled "Parking time limits in public parking lots." be and the same is hereby amended to include the following:

Washington Street Parking Lot: The parking of vehicles is hereby prohibited between the hours of 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from December 1 – April 1

The parking of vehicles is hereby prohibited to a period of no more than two hours, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except on Saturdays and Sundays, as follows: Washington Street Parking Lot

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

MOVED THAT the second reading of this ordinance be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

13. RESOLUTION – Establishing Regular City Council Meeting Nights

City Manager Hendrix presented the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Geneva City Charter provides that the City Council shall, at its organizational meeting, designate its official regular council meeting time, and

WHEREAS, in the past, City Council has met on the first Wednesday evening of each month as its official regular meeting night, and

WHEREAS, this Council is desirous to continue to conduct their regular meetings on the first Wednesday of every month beginning in February of 2026.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, that the official Council meeting for the conducting of its regular business for the City of Geneva shall be the first Wednesday of each month commencing at 7:00 PM beginning in February of 2026.

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

14. RESOLUTION – Designating Official Newspaper of Record

City Manager Hendrix presented the following Resolution:

WHEREAS, the Geneva City Charter provides that the City Council shall designate an official newspaper for the publishing of public notices, and other official notifications for the City of Geneva, and

WHEREAS, The Finger Lakes Times has previously been designated as the official newspaper for the City for such purposes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, that The Finger Lakes Times be and the same hereby is designated as the official newspaper for the City of Geneva.

RESOLVED this 7th day of January 2026

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

15. RESOLUTION – Designating Official Depositories for the City

City Manager Hendrix presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Geneva City Charter provides that the City Council shall designate official depositories for the City of Geneva at its first organizational meeting, and

WHEREAS, it benefits the City to have many institutions competing for deposit services; and

WHEREAS, New York State has rigid requirements for banks wishing to hold municipal deposits.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, that any bank with a branch office within the City limits, which is authorized to hold municipal deposits by the State of New York, is designated as an official depository for funds of the City of Geneva.

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

16. RESOLUTION – Amending the Rules of Procedure

Mayor Cecere presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Geneva City Council has adopted Rules of Procedure to govern the orderly and transparent conduct of its meetings and legislative actions; and

WHEREAS, the Council desires to establish clear standards for the introduction, review, and agenda placement of resolutions in order to promote thoughtful deliberation, adequate staff review, and collaboration among Council members; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment sets forth requirements for sponsorship, co-sponsorship, and a defined review period, while preserving flexibility for administrative and emergency matters; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Rules of Procedure of the Geneva City Council are hereby amended to add a new section #9 titled: INTRODUCTION AND SPONSORSHIP OF RESOLUTIONS which outlines the governing the introduction and sponsorship of resolutions, including requirements for councilmembers to have a Primary Sponsor, at least one Co-Sponsor, written submission, and a thirty (30) day review period prior to placement on the agenda of a Regular Meeting as detailed in the attached; and

RESOLVED, that the amendment shall further provide for limited exceptions for administrative or emergency matters upon written certification by the City Manager and concurrence of the Mayor; and

RESOLVED, that the City Clerk is hereby directed to administer and enforce this rule consistent with its terms, and to incorporate the amendment into the official Rules of Procedure of the Geneva City Council; and

RESOLVED, that this amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Councilor Lavin shared that he sees the spirit as right here, but raised concerns that he is watching a process that is backwards. Instead of getting issues out on the table, there is a labyrinth to get through. He believes that if a councilor gets a motion and second, that should be enough, and research by administrators shouldn't be required for councilmembers to bring items to the table, but he will vote for the resolution. Councilor Gillotte called this a working document that changes can still be made to, explaining that sometimes council hasn't had enough knowledge, and this gives council time to do homework before voting. Councilor Grimaldi shared that he agrees with Councilor Lavin, and that council needs the ability to make resolutions at a meeting. Mayor Cecere clarified that this allows council to be more focused, and come to better conclusions.

ACTION TAKEN by Clr; Kaim, seconded by Clr. Petropoulos

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

ROLL CALL VOTE: **Aye - Clr. Brennan, Clr. Kaim, Clr. Petropoulos, Clr. Gillotte, Clr. Lavin, Clr. Gummo, Mayor Cecere**

Nay - Clr. Grimaldi

MOTION CARRIED (7-1-1 absent)

17. **RESOLUTION** – Urging the Amendment of State Laws to Grant Judges Clear Authority to Consider Public Safety in Pretrial Release Decisions

Mayor Cecere presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva is committed to ensuring the safety, well-being, and quality of life of all residents, businesses, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the State of New York's current bail statutes, as amended since 2019, limit judicial authority by prohibiting judges from explicitly considering public safety or dangerousness when determining whether to set bail or remand a defendant pretrial; and

WHEREAS, New York State remains one of the only states in the nation where judges cannot detain an individual pretrial based on demonstrated public-safety risk, resulting in an appearance-based system that restricts the ability of courts to address violent or high-risk repeat offenders appropriately; and

WHEREAS, in the City of Geneva there have been multiple incidents in which individuals arrested for serious, violent, or escalating offenses were released immediately due to the constraints of current bail law and subsequently continued dangerous behavior that posed clear risks to victims, neighbors, businesses, bystanders, and responding officers; and

WHEREAS, such incidents have included recurring domestic violence offenses, repeated incidents involving weapons or threats of violence, persistent harassment and intimidation of residents, and other escalating situations in which the justice system lacked clear statutory authority to detain the individuals involved for the safety of the community; and **WHEREAS**, these patterns have placed significant burdens on the Geneva Police Department, requiring officers to respond multiple times to the same individuals within short periods, increasing strain on public-safety resources and exposing officers and the public to preventable harm; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Conference of Mayors (NYCOM), numerous local governments, and a bipartisan group of State Legislators, including Senator Pam Helming, have urged reconsideration of current bail statutes to incorporate public safety as a factor in pretrial release decisions; and

WHEREAS, Governor Kathy Hochul has signaled openness to further refinements of New York's bail laws to improve judicial discretion and enhance community safety; and

WHEREAS, granting judges clear authority to evaluate public-safety risks in appropriate cases—particularly those involving violence, weapons, repeat offenses, or escalating threatening behavior—would align New York with national practices and strengthen community trust in the justice system; and

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva recognizes the importance of maintaining fairness and equity in pretrial procedures and affirms that no individual should be detained solely due to economic status; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Geneva, New York, hereby urges the Governor of the State of New York and the New York State Legislature to amend the State's bail laws to grant judges explicit statutory authority to consider public safety and dangerousness when making pretrial release and bail determinations; and further

RESOLVED, that such amendments should provide courts with clear, transparent criteria and appropriate judicial discretion in evaluating public-safety risk, ensure that individuals who pose clear and demonstrable threats to victims or the community may be detained pretrial regardless of financial resources, and maintain a commitment to fairness by basing detention decisions on risk rather than wealth; and further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor of the State of New York, members of the New York State Legislature representing the region, the New York State Conference of Mayors, Ontario County officials, local judicial and law enforcement leadership, and other relevant state and regional stakeholders; and further

RESOLVED, that the City of Geneva stands ready to collaborate with state policymakers, public-safety officials, and community partners to advance reforms that make the City of Geneva and New York State safer, fairer, and more just.

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

MOVED THAT this resolution be approved

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

18. **RESOLUTION** – Affirming the City of Geneva Code of Ethics and Establishing the City Council Commitment to the Highest Standards of Professional Conduct

Mayor Cecere presented the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the City of Geneva has established, pursuant to Chapter 26 of the City Code and in accordance with New York General Municipal Law §806, a Code of Ethics that defines the standards of ethical behavior expected of all City officers and employees; and

WHEREAS, the Code of Ethics affirms that ethical governance is essential to maintaining public confidence, ensuring transparency, and promoting accountability across all levels of City government; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Members of the City Council serve as the highest elected officials in the City of Geneva, and as such are entrusted with stewarding the public's resources, making policy decisions that affect all residents, and setting the tone for integrity and professionalism within City Hall; and

WHEREAS, this City Council recognizes that adherence to the Code of Ethics is not merely a compliance requirement, but a foundational principle necessary for responsible governance, effective collaboration, and the advancement of a well-functioning City government; and

WHEREAS, the Council desires to formally affirm its commitment to the existing Code of Ethics and to adopt additional expectations for professional conduct that reflect the values, responsibilities, and fiduciary duties associated with elected office;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Geneva hereby reaffirms full support for, and adherence to, the City of Geneva Code of Ethics, as set forth in Chapter 26 of the City Code; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all Council Members shall complete all required disclosures, including Statements of Economic Interest, and shall conduct themselves at all times in compliance with the letter and spirit of the Code of Ethics, New York State law, and all other applicable legal obligations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council hereby establishes and affirms the following principles of Professional Conduct to guide its work throughout its term:

1. Commitment to the Public Trust

Council Members shall act in the best interest of the City of Geneva and its residents, placing public service above personal, political, or financial gain.

2. Respectful and Civil Engagement

Council Members shall maintain a professional, courteous, and respectful environment in all public meetings, Council communications, and interactions with residents, City staff, and fellow elected officials.

3. Transparency and Accountability

Council Members shall conduct City business openly, honestly, and with a commitment to full and fair disclosure, recusal where appropriate, and timely reporting as required by law and policy.

4. Responsible Stewardship of City Resources

Council Members shall use City property, funds, time, and staff support solely for official purposes and in accordance with established policies.

5. Collaboration and Effective Governance

Council Members shall work cooperatively with one another, the Mayor, and the City Manager and City staff to ensure a functional, professional, and productive government focused on outcomes for the community.

6. Upholding Confidentiality and Legal Obligations

Council Members shall safeguard confidential information received in the course of their duties and comply with all laws governing public records, meetings, personnel matters, and ethics.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council directs that this resolution be included in the Council's Organizational Meeting materials and distributed to all newly elected and appointed officials as an affirmation of the Council's commitment to ethical and professional governance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council shall review these standards annually, as required by §26-7 of the Code of Ethics, and consider updates as needed to uphold the highest expectations of public conduct.

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

19. FINANCE AD HOC COMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT

Mayor Cecere introduced the creation of a Finance Ad Hoc Committee to support the Comptroller, City Manager, and City Council. He explained that the committee will evaluate cash and debt, create financial governance metrics and strengthen the annual budget process. The committee members will be Charles Bauder, Gary Baxter, Cyril Smith, Kiam Wong, Councilor Lavin, and Councilor Grimaldi.

20. DEPUTY MAYOR APPOINTMENT

Mayor Cecere appointed Councilor Gillotte Deputy Mayor of the City of Geneva

21. COUNCIL AND LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS

Mayor Cecere made the following City Council Liaison Assignments to Boards and Commissions:

Business Improvement District	Councilor Gillotte
Geneva Housing Authority	Councilor Grimaldi
Geneva Green Committee	Councilor Gummoe
Historic Districts Commission	Councilor Brennan
Human Rights Commission	Councilor Whitfield
Industrial Development Agency	Councilor Lavin
Local Development Corporation	Councilor Petropoulos
Planning Board	Councilor Gummoe
Police Budget Advisory Board	Councilor Gillotte
Recreation Advisory Board	Councilor Kaim
Shade Tree Committee	Councilor Brennan
Zoning Board of Appeals	Councilor Brennan
MAP/BEST Grant	Councilor Lavin

22. BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

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

MOVED THAT Lowell Dewey be reappointed to the Recreation Advisory Board, Jim Norwalk be reappointed to the Shade Tree Committee, James Cardinale be appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals, and that Michael John be appointed Fire Commissioner for the Nester Hose Company.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

23. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:45pm

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (8-1 absent)

Nicole Tillotson
City Clerk

