

SCRANTON CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEARING

IN RE: FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 11, 2014 - (AS AMENDED) -  
 AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 74, 1993, AS AMENDED,  
 ENTITLED "CITY OF SCRANTON ZONING ORDINANCE OF 1993",  
 BY CHANGING THE ZONING MAP DESIGNATION OF THE JOHN J.  
 AUDUBON SCHOOL FROM R-1A (MEDIUM LOW DENSITY  
 RESIDENTIAL) TO INS-G (GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL) IN THE  
 CENTRAL PLANNING AREA IN THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE  
 CITY OF SCRANTON.

HELD:

Thursday, May 22, 2014

LOCATION:

Council Chambers

Scranton City Hall

340 North Washington Avenue

Scranton, Pennsylvania

CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR - OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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CITY OF SCRANTON COUNCIL:

ROBERT MCGOFF, PRESIDENT

PATRICK ROGAN, VICE-PRESIDENT

JOHN LOSCOMBE

(Not present)

JOSEPH WECHSLER

WILLIAM GAUGHAN

LORI REED, CITY CLERK

KATHY CARRERA, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

PATRICK SCANLON, SOLICITOR

1 MR. MCGOFF: I'd like to call this  
2 public hearing to order. Roll call, please.

3 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Wechsler.

4 MR. WECHSLER: Here.

5 MS. CARRERA: Mr. Rogan. Mr.  
6 Loscombe. Mr. Gaughan.

7 MR. GAUGHAN: Here.

8 MS. CARRERA: Mr. McGoff.

9 MR. MCGOFF: Here.

10 The purpose of said public hearing  
11 is to hear the testimony and discuss the  
12 following:

13 FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 11, 2014 -(AS  
14 AMENDED) - AMENDING FILE OF COUNCIL NO. 74,  
15 1993, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED "CITY OF SCRANTON  
16 ZONING ORDINANCE OF 1993", BY CHANGING THE  
17 ZONING MAP DESIGNATION OF THE JOHN J.  
18 AUDUBON SCHOOL FROM R-1A (MEDIUM LOW DENSITY  
19 RESIDENTIAL) TO INS-G (GENERAL  
20 INSTITUTIONAL) IN THE CENTRAL PLANNING AREA  
21 IN THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE CITY OF  
22 SCRANTON.

23 First speaker is Ed Scacchitti.

24 MR. SCACCHITTI: Mr. Chairman, can  
25 we have a presentation from the proponent

1 for the zoning change first?

2 MR. MCGOFF: Excuse me?

3 MR. SCACCHITTI: Are we going to  
4 have a presentation from the proponent from  
5 the zoning change?

6 MR. MCGOFF: No.

7 MR. SCACCHITTI: So there is no  
8 presentation at all. Okay. Is there an  
9 easel here? I guess not.

10 Good afternoon, gentlemen. Edmund  
11 Scacchitti, 425 Arthur Avenue, a resident of  
12 the immediate neighborhood effected by the  
13 zoning change. Also, I had the pleasure of  
14 serving as solicitor to this great city  
15 under the administration of James Barrett  
16 McNulty, and I also had the pleasure of  
17 serving as the Zoning hearing Board  
18 solicitor for a number of years under the  
19 former mayor Jimmy Connors.

20 I had an opportunity to appear in  
21 opposition to the proposed amended change at  
22 the time of the appearance by the proponents  
23 before the Planning Commission, I guess that  
24 was three and a half or four weeks or so  
25 ago. I don't know if you get an agenda or a

1 synopsis of the meeting, but some varying  
2 points viewpoints were presented in support  
3 of the proposed change, and a couple of  
4 speakers, including myself, spoke in  
5 opposition to it and on a 3-2 vote the  
6 recommendation was made for the change and  
7 we recognize, and I'm sure that council  
8 knows that the role of the Planning  
9 Commission is advisory only. Whether they  
10 voted for it or against it doesn't change  
11 what council or may or may not do this  
12 evening with the amendment.

13 Just by way of history, I know one  
14 of my other neighbors was here this evening,  
15 back in 1992-93 a number of us were actively  
16 involved in the evolution of the current  
17 zoning ordinance as well as the  
18 comprehensive plan.

19 Rick, were you on that committee?

20 MR. JONES: Yes, I was the chairman  
21 of the committee.

22 MR. SCACCHITTI: The relevance of  
23 that is because like many neighborhoods and  
24 many neighbors, and as a former I'll call  
25 myself a public official, I was interested

1 in two things. Number one, that the outcome  
2 of the comprehensive change to the zoning  
3 plan and comprehensive plan and the zoning  
4 map would be fair; and number two, that  
5 there would be remedies in the event that we  
6 had to make a change.

7 And typically a remedy for a change  
8 in the use of the property is in the  
9 appearance before the Zoning Hearing Board.  
10 The reason we have that is because inherent  
11 in the powers of the Zoning Hearing Board is  
12 the opportunity to grant or deny, but in  
13 this case to grant certain zoning relief  
14 with appropriate conditions and each  
15 applicant before the Zoning Board appears  
16 with the proposed project, development,  
17 whatever it is, and that project or  
18 development lives or dies based on what is  
19 being presented in terms of what is intended  
20 to be done with the particular lot and  
21 whether or not it meets the requirement of  
22 the zoning ordinance in all respects, some  
23 respects and what type of relief should be  
24 granted.

25 Frankly, I don't see any reason why

1 other than the fact that they have an  
2 absolutely right to do it, that Geisinger  
3 Community Medical Center is not pursuing  
4 whatever they think they want to pursue for  
5 the use of that property through the Zoning  
6 Hearing Board.

7 Now, I understand they have an  
8 agreement of sale with the Scranton School  
9 District that says if this body elects to  
10 amend the zoning ordinance by making this  
11 property institutional rather than  
12 residential they then will pay \$750,000. I  
13 think that's the extent of the agreement.

14 Now, in terms of the merit, the  
15 merits of the requested zoning change, when  
16 we were here for the Planning Commission  
17 meeting essentially the argument was, well,  
18 it's near our campus, the school district  
19 essentially wanted us to make an offer  
20 because it was advertised and nobody bought  
21 it. And, yeah, okay, we'll take it but we  
22 don't have any plans for it right now other  
23 than to raise the building, and when and if  
24 that building is raised the plan as the  
25 evening further developed and the

1 information was forthcoming was to use that  
2 property at least for a couple of years as a  
3 staging area for construction equipment and  
4 materials, things of that nature going  
5 forward.

6 And I'm sure all of you are well  
7 aware of the significant project that  
8 Geisinger CMC is undertaking as we speak  
9 today. Essentially they are making  
10 significant additions to the footprint to  
11 accommodate changes that are dictated by the  
12 medical science -- is that for me? I don't  
13 get any more time then?

14 MR. MCGOFF: Please continue.

15 MR. SCACCHITTI: I was only getting  
16 warmed up. You know, lawyers are tough.

17 MR. MCGOFF: There is by precedent a  
18 five-minute limit.

19 MR. SCACCHITTI: I'm sorry, I wasn't  
20 aware of that.

21 MR. MCGOFF: Please feel free to  
22 finish.

23 MR. SCACCHITTI: I understand there  
24 is a limitation on public comment, but I  
25 wasn't aware at a public hearing that you

1 had limitations on it.

2 MR. MCGOFF: Please continue.

3 MR. SCACCHITTI: Thank you,  
4 Mr. McGoff. In any case, Geisinger  
5 Community Medical Center is asking that body  
6 to change the zoning on that block without  
7 any specific idea of what they intend to do  
8 with that property, and that is I believe  
9 personally it's disconcerting as a resident  
10 in the neighborhood, but I would think it  
11 would be something of a concern to the  
12 members of this body who have would have to  
13 ultimately decide on the zoning change  
14 because why should we change the zoning on  
15 that particular lot, which is a key lot at  
16 the end of the beginning of one of the more  
17 substantial residential neighborhoods in the  
18 City of Scranton? Why should we do  
19 something like that without some specific  
20 idea? And I think it would be totally  
21 inappropriate for this body to approve a  
22 zoning change merely because there's an  
23 agreement to purchase, but without a plan.

24 But more importantly than that, and  
25 I started this by saying that I was

1 involved, and Mr. Jones who you may hear  
2 from later and maybe not, was involved in  
3 the 1993 amendments which was the first time  
4 the zoning ordinance was updated probably in  
5 30 years in the city. And one of the  
6 reasons we established this institutional  
7 was essentially in compliance with the  
8 provision of the comprehensive plan, which  
9 I'm sure most of you if not all of have you  
10 seen or read parts or all of it, but in the  
11 comprehensive plan which compliments the  
12 city's zoning ordinance, under the major  
13 goals section executive summary it recites  
14 under land use that the thing that is of  
15 paramount importance is to stabilize and  
16 protect existing neighborhoods, number one;  
17 and number two, to balance the needs of the  
18 city's major institutions with the needs of  
19 the adjacent neighborhoods.

20 So in addition to the fact that  
21 there is no clearcut vision for what we are  
22 going to do with this particular parcel that  
23 the school district presently owns, the more  
24 pressing concern is that this will allow  
25 Geisinger Community Medical Center to step

1 out of it's campus, outside of the  
2 institutional zone in other area of the  
3 city, which if history teaches us anything  
4 will more likely than not be the beginning  
5 of the end of the residential character of  
6 that neighborhood and the properties  
7 immediately in that neighborhood as they  
8 would be impacted by having a  
9 hospital-related facility on that block.

10 I don't know if you gentleman had an  
11 opportunity to drive up there or look at it,  
12 I know you are all familiar with it, if  
13 you've been to Nay Aug Park you know the  
14 neighborhood, but after the Audubon School  
15 we have residential housing, I think on that  
16 block there is some multi-family homes and  
17 there is some at the end of Arthur Avenue  
18 which abuts the park, but once you get  
19 beyond the second or third property it's all  
20 single family homes all the way down to  
21 Olive Street where you would enter to use  
22 the pool complex.

23 I'm not a realtor, but I think logic  
24 tells me that if the hospital were to  
25 acquire this property pursuant to the zoning

1 change then Mr. Reese, who lives immediately  
2 adjacent to this property has a home that  
3 only has value to Geisinger and not to any  
4 subsequent purchaser. You are squinting at  
5 me, I don't know if you are confused by that  
6 statement, but the simple fact of the  
7 matter, Mr. McGoff, is once the property is  
8 acquired for the hospital related use there  
9 aren't too many buyers who going to be  
10 interested in purchasing a property  
11 immediately adjacent to this property  
12 because sitting here today we don't even  
13 know what they are going to use it for.

14 If they decide to build a six-story  
15 office building which, by the way, they have  
16 far more leniency in what they can do with  
17 their property if you change the zoning to  
18 institutional rather than making them come  
19 in and requesting the necessary variances,  
20 it just would render his property and other  
21 properties on that block potentially of  
22 substantial less value than they would be  
23 under the other circumstances. When the  
24 school was there it was not a problem, they  
25 were a school, compliments the environment.

1                   It was interesting that in the  
2                   Sunday Times there was an article entitled,  
3                   "Neighborhood Surgery" and I found the  
4                   article rather compelling, especially in the  
5                   context of this argument, if you read the  
6                   article and you looked at the schematic on  
7                   the back basically all of the land between  
8                   Moses Taylor Hospital and now Regional  
9                   Hospital, formerly Mercy Hospital, is being  
10                  acquired piece by piece by piece and in some  
11                  cases properties have been purchased for  
12                  four times their fair market value. Why is  
13                  that relevant? Because when I made the  
14                  statement that I'm not concerned as an  
15                  immediate neighbor that once a footprint of  
16                  institutional designation or classification  
17                  starts on that block it's only a matter of  
18                  the time before the hospital is going to  
19                  acquire additional properties going down  
20                  Colfax Avenue and possibly going down Arthur  
21                  Avenue which is right across the street from  
22                  the park and from an esthetic standpoint I'm  
23                  not sure how comfortable you gentlemen would  
24                  be with something like that, but it just  
25                  goes to the point that the institutions are

1 growing, the hospitals are competing and  
2 Geisinger/CMC has to compete, and if their  
3 neighbors down the hill living further are  
4 going to end up basically acquiring this  
5 entire block belted by East Gibson, Pine  
6 Street, Madison and Monroe Avenue, they will  
7 have an entire square block that was  
8 formerly property that was zoned residential  
9 and was tax producing, which is an another  
10 concern.

11 In a community that's having  
12 difficulty paying the light bill, it makes  
13 little sense to me to create an environment  
14 where we continue to erode tax producing  
15 real estate in the City of Scranton.

16 Now, just to digress again for a  
17 moment on CHS and the article in the  
18 newspaper, they acquired a substantial  
19 number of properties in the area I just  
20 described but they didn't approach this body  
21 and ask for a zoning change. They are  
22 acquiring these properties understanding to  
23 do anything with them they are going to have  
24 to go through the Zoning Hearing Board and  
25 make their case.

1                   To allow Geisinger cart blanche to  
2                   have the property without some plan I think  
3                   would be a slap in the face to the people  
4                   who live there and those same people are the  
5                   people who are helping to pay that light  
6                   bill that I mentioned a moment ago.

7                   The other thing that I thought was  
8                   important was there was an article recently  
9                   that Geisinger just opened a facility at the  
10                  Mt. Pleasant area near Scranton High School.  
11                  A lot of area there, a lot of room for  
12                  parking, and it seems to me that they had a  
13                  location there where in terms of future  
14                  development they have opportunities there  
15                  that they don't have necessarily in a  
16                  residential neighborhood unless they acquire  
17                  more property. You don't have to take my  
18                  word for it about the potential to take more  
19                  property, I happened to pick up a copy of  
20                  the application that Geisinger/CMC filed  
21                  with the Zoning Hearing Board, and in that  
22                  application as justification for all of the  
23                  variances that they needed to build the  
24                  addition that they are presently building  
25                  they specifically mention, and I quote,

1 "Geisinger and Community Medical Center must  
2 have the ability to expand in order to meet  
3 the needs of efficient health care  
4 facilities. The space required to meet the  
5 health care needs of this community exceeds  
6 the amount of space available."

7 What does that tell you? They have  
8 already outgrown what they have so where do  
9 they go? They go to the Audubon School and  
10 after the Audubon School they go to  
11 Mr. Reese's property and the other  
12 properties on that block for future  
13 development.

14 Now, I also had an opportunity to  
15 stop by the Lackawanna County Assessor's  
16 Office, this is a blowup, and I'll explain  
17 the coloring in a moment, this is a blowup  
18 of that immediate neighborhood according to  
19 the official assessment map of Lackawanna  
20 County for this neighborhood. The area  
21 shaded in tennis ball yellow or green,  
22 whatever your pleasure is, is the area  
23 presently occupied by the hospital or real  
24 estate that is acquired either directly or  
25 CMC had a subsidiary called Medical

1 Dimensions. They brought a lot of property  
2 in this neighborhood, which is now the  
3 property of Geisinger Community Medical  
4 Center. This big square right here abutted  
5 by Arthur Avenue on the east, Mulberry  
6 Street on the North, Linden Street on the  
7 south, and Colfax Avenue on the west, this  
8 is the main camp, this is where the current  
9 project is underway. Really across Colfax  
10 Avenue this half of a block is the two  
11 parking garages.

12 This area here, gentlemen, the main  
13 campus and the parking garages was the  
14 original institutional district that we all  
15 agreed made sense back in 1993. Since that  
16 time two additional residential lots have  
17 been acquired on the other side of I think  
18 this is Sherwood Court on Mulberry Street.  
19 There is another lot on Wheeler Avenue, and  
20 this, gentlemen, 60 percent of this block  
21 bounded by Linden Street to the north,  
22 Colfax Avenue to the east, Sherwood Court to  
23 the west, and Roslyn Avenue to the south, is  
24 also owned by Geisinger CMC.

25 So they are already outside of this

1 campus and they already have a surface  
2 parking lot and an area outside of their  
3 campus which if they have some future  
4 development plans then certainly there is an  
5 opportunity without encroaching further into  
6 the residential fabric of this immediate  
7 neighborhood.

8 So from a practical standpoint it  
9 makes little sense to me to grant cart  
10 blanche approval of the zoning change  
11 without a specific plan. I think that if  
12 and when there is a plan then the direction  
13 should be through the Zoning Hearing Board  
14 and let the chips fall where they may.

15 As I said a moment ago, CHS has  
16 acquired a significant number of the  
17 properties between Moses Taylor and  
18 Regional, they haven't appeared before this  
19 body to request a zoning change. The  
20 University of the Scranton a few years ago  
21 built two magnificent dormitories on  
22 Mulberry Street crossing from an  
23 institutional zone into a residential zone,  
24 but they didn't ask for a zoning change,  
25 they made their case before the Zoning

1           Hearing Board.

2                   I don't want to pit one neighborhood  
3           against the other, but some of the  
4           properties that were acquired for the  
5           University project and some of the  
6           properties that were acquired -- or are  
7           being acquired by CHS are properties that,  
8           unfortunately, have fallen into disrepair  
9           over a number of years. You can't say that  
10          for the 400 block of Arthur Avenue and 400  
11          block of Colfax Avenue and that neighborhood  
12          which boasts some of the highest income  
13          producing real estate in the City of  
14          Scranton.

15                   So we can agree to let them have a  
16          zoning change and continue to participate in  
17          the systematic destruction of the real  
18          estate tax producing realty in the City of  
19          Scranton, or we can say, hey, wait a minute,  
20          the guy from Arthur Avenue has a point, if  
21          they don't have a plan I don't know whether  
22          I can approve this because I don't know  
23          what's going to be there and if you have a  
24          plan next year or next month or two years  
25          from now we can go through this again, there

1 is no expense involved here except for  
2 advertising costs.

3 So I respectfully ask each of you up  
4 there and those of your colleagues who are  
5 not present, all of you, all of you in the  
6 City of Scranton, all of you ran on the  
7 platform that you were going to protect the  
8 neighborhoods and you were going to do  
9 what's right for the taxpayers. This is  
10 your opportunity to talk -- not only talk  
11 the talk, but walk the walk and I urge you  
12 to reconsider offer to consider a no vote on  
13 the vote tonight. Thank you very much.

14 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Lisa  
15 Golden.

16 MS. GOLDEN: Good afternoon. Thank  
17 you for this opportunity. I'm the vice  
18 president of clinical operations at GCMC and  
19 I just want to say we are here for the  
20 rezoning of the Audubon School and I'm here  
21 to present what Geisinger Health System has  
22 done -- is doing for the community. We have  
23 invested over \$158 million into Scranton.  
24 We are continuing to be focused on quality,  
25 patient care and build a program, expanding

1           our trauma program, neurosurgery, hospice  
2           program and continue to be focused on our  
3           patients.

4                       This school is going to give us the  
5           opportunity with the rezoning if this takes  
6           place today to have a staging area for the  
7           construction that is taking place currently  
8           now at the CMC site. We ask that this  
9           rezoning goes through. Again, we do not  
10          have plans for this area at this time. If  
11          the rezoning does go through, we would ask  
12          have to come back to you on what those plans  
13          are going to be.

14                      So currently there is no plan for  
15          the school when it is -- if it does come  
16          down, and again, we are here for the  
17          community, we are here for our patients and  
18          to bring quality and service excellence to  
19          this area.

20                      MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Mr. and  
21          Mrs. Sandone? No? Robert Markowski.

22                      MR. MARKOWSKI: Good evening. My  
23          name is Robert Markowski. I'm the associate  
24          vice president of facilities administration  
25          for the Geisinger health care system and

1 just a couple of the brief points on this  
2 matter. First of all, thank you for the  
3 opportunity. We, as Geisinger, you know,  
4 did not actively seek out the school  
5 district to purchase or potentially purchase  
6 this property. It was advertised in a  
7 public auction late 2012 and Geisinger saw  
8 the need that this could be a strategic  
9 addition so we attended the public hearing  
10 -- or, excuse me, we attended the public  
11 auction and we turned out to be the  
12 successful bidder.

13 As part of that we were requested in  
14 the agreement of the sale that this be  
15 rezoned to Institutional-G. Currently it's  
16 a school. You know, it doesn't really meet  
17 the current qualifications for any zoning  
18 under the act. I think it would revert to  
19 an R1-A medium density when it does change  
20 hands and, you know, we don't have any  
21 immediate plans for development of this  
22 site. We have gone on record since the  
23 public auction, excuse me, that our intent  
24 if we acquired the building to raise it,  
25 possibly use it as a staging area for the

1 construction project, and after the project  
2 we would restore it to a green space until  
3 such time as we had future development needs  
4 on that site.

5 We are being very transparent. We  
6 do not have an approved project. We haven't  
7 even looked at any plans for that area, but  
8 I think it's important to reiterate that if  
9 we did ever want to pursue development on  
10 that site we would have to go through the  
11 planning commission and the city zoning  
12 board irregardless of the Institutional-G.  
13 As you are well aware there of certain  
14 restrictions, requirements that we have to  
15 meet.

16 So, you know, there is no -- there  
17 is no slight of hand here, we are being very  
18 transparent. It's too early to tell we're  
19 in the midst of a \$97 million expansion  
20 project. It's going to add a significant  
21 square footage to the campus. We really  
22 have to see when all is said and done what  
23 the needs are if there is any future needs  
24 and if there is funding available to develop  
25 a site.

1                   So that's really, you know, the  
2                   driver of why we don't have any or we can't  
3                   say that we have any definite plans because  
4                   we don't want to mislead anybody. We are  
5                   being totally transparent. We at this time  
6                   have no project and probably for the  
7                   foreseeable future we have no development  
8                   planned for that.

9                   And, you know, I do think it's  
10                  important that because of that currently  
11                  that property is not on the tax rolls, so if  
12                  this transaction does take place and we  
13                  acquire it, it will go on the tax rolls and  
14                  it will become a taxable entity and it will  
15                  stay taxable until that time that we do  
16                  apply for and erect a building that meets  
17                  the tax exempt criteria.

18                 Now, that doesn't mean that any  
19                 Geisinger building meets that criteria, you  
20                 know, for instance, the new building that  
21                 just opened out in Mt. Pleasant that's not a  
22                 tax exempt entity. It depends on what  
23                 services you offer there and right now, as  
24                 we have said at the planning commission, you  
25                 know, if we were to assess needs right now

1 at this point in time it looks like it would  
2 would be a medical office outpatient  
3 ancillary services. With that, we have to  
4 provide adequate parking as required by  
5 zoning on that site to support that and, you  
6 know, that is not necessarily an extension  
7 of the hospital. Those are different  
8 services that support the hospital.  
9 However, due to some of the complexities of  
10 that they necessarily don't work well if  
11 they are remote from the hospital site.  
12 They do need to be proximal to the hospital  
13 campus to serve that purpose.

14 So there really is a brief summary  
15 of why we are here tonight requesting this.  
16 I won't take any more of your time, but I do  
17 thank you for your time and your attention  
18 and hope you would consider our request.

19 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Marybeth,  
20 and I can't -- I'm sorry on the last name.  
21 I don't want to mispronounce it. I'm sorry.

22 MS. MIKALACHAK: Hi. My name is  
23 Mary Beth Mikalachak. I live in the 400  
24 block of Arthur Avenue since 1982. I wasn't  
25 prepared to speak tonight, but I'll just

1 tell you my opinion on how I feel. I just  
2 think if they come over to our side that,  
3 like Mr. Scacchitti said, it's just going to  
4 be to be a matter of time before there is  
5 buildings surrounding you, and I know now  
6 just with the construction site now we have  
7 trouble with the parking, you know, we have  
8 construction trucks, we have everything on  
9 Arthur Avenue, and I think there was one  
10 time in the winter where there was like  
11 seven vehicles, trucks from the construction  
12 on our street and we are supposed to be  
13 residential and we are paying for permits.  
14 So what are you going to do with the parking  
15 if you start putting huge buildings up  
16 there?

17 And I'm actually right across from  
18 the school and I'm concerned that if that  
19 school gets torn down if there is a mold in  
20 there what's going to become of all of that  
21 and then you are going to put trucks and  
22 more dirt and dust and noise and everything  
23 like that and our residential area is just  
24 not going to be residential anymore.

25 Now it's loud in the morning. I

1 mean, they are supposed to start I believe  
2 at 7:00 and you have got 20 to seven, you  
3 know, it's just quarter to seven you just  
4 start hearing the noise all morning, so if  
5 you allow them to come over you are just  
6 going to have more noise, more dirt, more  
7 parking problems, and I would actually like  
8 to keep our side of Arthur residential.  
9 Thank you.

10 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Next person  
11 again I am having difficulty reading the  
12 name. Charles maybe and K-R-Y.

13 MR. KRYGEVICH: It's Krygevich and I  
14 didn't want to speak.

15 MR. MCGOFF: Okay, thank you.  
16 Samuel Clark?

17 MR. CLARK: I'm not speaking.

18 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you. Is there  
19 anyone else who wishes to address counsel?

20 MS. BARRETT: I do. I didn't sign  
21 in, but --

22 MR. MCGOFF: Please.

23 MS. BARRETT: My name is Sally  
24 Barrett, 437 Arthur Avenue. I'm a resident  
25 for 27, 28 years and we have a wonderful

1 neighborhood, beautiful, beautiful homes.  
2 We have spent a tremendous amount of money  
3 and since Geisinger started this project I  
4 have been awoken at quarter to six in the  
5 morning two Saturdays ago, called the  
6 hospital, they have never called me back.  
7 They are not sympathetic to the neighbor's  
8 needs, and if any of you have ever been to a  
9 big hospital in a big city the University of  
10 Penn, you go through the neighborhoods and  
11 the homes that were once absolutely  
12 beautiful, like ours are on Arthur Avenue,  
13 have this plaque in front of it saying what  
14 hospital building it is, and I'm assuming  
15 that that probably in about ten years, I  
16 don't know if I'll be there, but in ten  
17 years that's going to be my house with a  
18 plaque saying it's some kind of the business  
19 for Geisinger.

20 And as Attorney Scacchitti said, you  
21 people were elected to serve the  
22 neighborhoods, the people that put you into  
23 office. Scranton is unique as far as our  
24 neighborhoods are concerned. We have  
25 wonderful people who are raising children,

1 my two children went to Audubon, and I love  
2 my neighborhood and I'd appreciate you as  
3 elected officials being concerned about your  
4 neighbors, and I pay a lot of taxes and so  
5 do all of my neighbors, and I would just  
6 appeal to you from my heart as a resident  
7 from Scranton that neighborhood I can  
8 guarantee it will not be there in 20 years  
9 if you don't do the right thing.

10 And I have really nothing against  
11 Geisinger other than the fact they don't  
12 call me back and it's -- they have created a  
13 huge problem up there. All of the people  
14 that are working there right now park in  
15 back of the museum, have taken every single  
16 lot in back of the museum for their own  
17 needs, and I can't believe that the  
18 neighbors haven't complained. I can't  
19 believe that the museum hasn't complained.  
20 Most of these workers I can guarantee aren't  
21 even from Scranton. I go up with my dogs  
22 every day and I look at these trucks and I'm  
23 thinking how dare them park in the lots that  
24 were reserved for city residents.

25 It's appalling. It's appalling that

1 I pay the kind of taxes I pay and all of my  
2 neighbors pay and we don't get anything back  
3 from the city. The conditions that the city  
4 is in right now, and I'm not going to get  
5 started with this because I'm too passionate  
6 about it, but we've almost forced people to  
7 sell their homes and get out. We have the  
8 most beautiful homes and the most beautiful  
9 neighborhoods, please respect it. Please  
10 vote the right way. That's all I'm asking.  
11 Thank you.

12 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

13 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

14 (While Mrs. Barrett was speaking,  
15 Councilman Rogan takes the dais and joins  
16 the meeting.)

17 MR. JONES: Richard Jones, 421  
18 Arthur Avenue, Scranton, Pennsylvania. As  
19 Attorney Scacchitti indicated earlier, back  
20 in the early 90's Mayor Wenzel had appointed  
21 me to the city planning commission and on  
22 the four years that I was on the planning  
23 almost the entire time was spent developing  
24 our new city master plan and city zoning  
25 ordinance which has withstood the test of

1 time over the last 20 years.

2 I bought my home in December of  
3 1981. I'm the third owner of a 101-year-old  
4 house. Nine foot ceilings, pocket doors,  
5 fantastic property. My house is directly  
6 either behind or in front of, depending on  
7 how you want to look at it, Mr. Reese's  
8 property in the 400 block of Colfax, so his  
9 house is directly next to the Audubon  
10 school, so the backyard of my house faces  
11 the side of the Audubon school.

12 The school district was in the  
13 process and had spent millions of dollars  
14 renovating Audubon which is approximately a  
15 100-year-old grade school. They had just  
16 put a new roof on the school and they were  
17 working with Peters Engineering to do other  
18 renovations to it when they mysteriously  
19 discovered this mold problem, which  
20 unfortunately shut down or neighborhood  
21 school where my oldest son had attended.  
22 Three of my four children were born at CMC.  
23 It was the neighborhood hospital.

24 Our area is residential. The school  
25 is grandfathered under our master plan

1 zoning ordinance because it was already  
2 there just like our 100-year-old homes have  
3 been there. My wife and I have a combined  
4 income of approximately \$150,000. I live  
5 next to two school teachers who have a  
6 combined income of in excess of \$100,000.  
7 Ed Scacchitti lives next to them, he is an  
8 attorney in the city for over 30 years, as  
9 long as I have lived in that neighborhood.  
10 Gene Barrett and his wife are next to the  
11 Scacchittis. Gene is former member of city  
12 council and runs the Scranton Sewer  
13 Authority. Next to Gene is a young family,  
14 young couple with a young son three or four  
15 years old, just bought their property a  
16 couple of years ago from Bobby Osborne. We  
17 have a terrific neighborhood.

18 Since I have lived in Scranton I  
19 have seen at least three if not four  
20 hospitals close in Lackawanna County. We  
21 lost our two hospitals in Carbondale, we are  
22 probably in the process of losing Mid-Valley  
23 Hospital and we have lost Scranton State  
24 Hospital. That I know under those  
25 conditions and with our aging population

1 puts a lot of pressures on the existing  
2 facilities that serve our area, however,  
3 without residents paying taxes we are not  
4 going to need hospitals, so I am implore you  
5 to respect the work of your predecessors on  
6 city council who adopted the city's master  
7 plan and zoning ordinance and keep our area  
8 residential.

9 As he had said, we spend an  
10 inordinate amount of money on our taxes, our  
11 wage taxes, on our real estate taxes, and we  
12 have preserved that neighborhood over these  
13 last 30 or so years and we would like to be  
14 able to continue to preserve it. It's a  
15 wonderful place to live. We got the nicest  
16 city park in the city directly across the  
17 street from us. That whole character, that  
18 whole fabric will be lost if the  
19 encroachment starts coming north. They are  
20 already growing south. They are already  
21 growing west. They can't come across into  
22 Nay Aug. If they could, they would. So  
23 please do the right thing as our speakers  
24 have said and maintain the character of our  
25 neighborhood. Thank you.

1 MR. MCGOFF: Thank you.

2 MR. HAILSTONE: Drew Hailstone. If  
3 counsel please, I'm Drew Hailstone and I  
4 represent Geisinger. I just want to clear  
5 up the record, we are required to provide  
6 proof of the notice that was sent to the  
7 neighbors, that's been delivered to the  
8 zoning officer and I want the record here to  
9 have a copy of the proof of the notice.

10 I'd also call your attention that  
11 both the city planning commission and the  
12 county regional planning commission have  
13 recommended this adoption and the interest  
14 and favor of the county regional planning  
15 commission report, which city council has,  
16 is their opinion that when the ordinance was  
17 passed in 1993 the Audubon site should have  
18 been zoned general institution because it  
19 was occupied by an active school.

20 Keep in mind that this site is  
21 surrounded on three sides by streets, two  
22 streets and a court. A lot of what you have  
23 heard this evening is speculation. This is  
24 an opportunity that has come to Geisinger  
25 rather than something that they sought, as

1 Mr. Markowski said. If Geisinger doesn't  
2 acquire it, what then? The school district  
3 is out \$750,000 and an empty moldering  
4 building remains, but more important than  
5 that, in the 21st century this community  
6 needs adequate health care, and as  
7 Mr. Markowski said facilities adjacent to  
8 the hospital are important to the proper  
9 working of the office.

10 And one last thing, if you look at  
11 the zoning ordinance there is a very limited  
12 number of the things that can be done in a  
13 general institution district. By making it  
14 general institution, they are not giving the  
15 hospital cart blanche. There are very few  
16 permitted uses, very few, and any plan would  
17 have to be reviewed and approved by the  
18 planning commission. Thank you.

19 MR. GAUGHAN: Thank you.

20 MR. MCGOFF: Is there anyone else  
21 who wishes to speak to this issue? If not,  
22 this public hearing is adjourned.  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes of testimony taken by me at the hearing of the above-captioned matter and that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the same to the best of my ability.

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CATHENE S. NARDOZZI, RPR  
OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER