

**MINUTES  
HAZLETON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2026**

**Call to Order:** Council met at a Regular Meeting session on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

**Silent Meditation and Pledge of Allegiance:** A silent moment was taken followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-present; Colombo-present; Nilles-present; Ondishin-present; Perry-present

**Minutes of Previous Meetings:** The minutes of March 24, 2026, Regular Meeting were approved unanimously.

**Presentations/Proclamations/Communications: None**

**Bid Opening: None**

**BUSINESS AT HAND: PUBLIC HEARING**

A public hearing to discuss The Greater Hazleton Area Thrive 2035 Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan for the City of Hazleton, Borough of West Hazleton, and Hazle Township was held at 6:00 p.m.

Sara Hailstone, President of Hailstone Economics, stated Hailstone oversaw the Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan. The plan is a policy guide and aligns with the City's ten-year goals. There was a 23-person steering committee who oversaw the process. There were surveys, a website, focus groups, attended public events, a public meeting, and individual interviews conducted. The area is known for having good paying jobs, excellent schools, well-maintained housing, charming small businesses and restaurants, cultural and art experiences, and abundant parks and green spaces.

Hailstone stated the steering committee decided there were five priority areas to focus on. These include:

1. Housing
2. Economic Vitality
3. Youth
4. Services and Amenities
5. Resilient Systems

Hailstone stated the Implementation process is to establish the Regional Implementation Committee, engage stakeholders, secure funding and monitor progress.

Hailstone said this should not be kept "on the shelf". She said the City will more likely receive more grants from implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Perry stated the City is growing. He thanked Mayor Cusat and the "whole crew". Perry stated there were comments that people sent online.

Mayor Cusat said the City received a grant for the Comprehensive Plan from DCED. The City wants to look at "shared zoning". He stated some buildings that are to be constructed will be "half in Hazle Township and half in the City of Hazleton". He mentioned the municipalities need to be on the same page.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Richard Wienches, Hazle Township, said he spoke to Mayor Cusat about getting the City access to the Community Park in Black Creek Township. He stated this would get the children off their cell phones and outside.

Wienches said the Rails to Trails is not handicapped accessible.

Lisa Logan, resident of Sugarloaf Township, said this Comprehensive Multi-Municipal Plan excludes a lot of surrounding municipalities. She said these decisions are affecting her as a taxpayer and the HASD. Logan said housing growth is regional. The plan cannot ignore regional transportation needs. Logan suggested City Council delay their vote until all municipalities are included in this plan.

Mayor Cusat said the City received this grant through the ACT 47 Plan. He mentioned DCED suggested the Comprehensive Plan include municipalities that "touch" the City's boundaries. He said he tried to expand it because, originally, it was a City-only Comprehensive Plan.

Ashley Bart, resident of Hazleton, asked if this plan is a \$100,000 expense to the City. Mayor Cusat said the City received a grant for this plan. She said this plan will continue to decimate the area. She asked City Council members if they read through the whole plan. Perry said it took a long time to accumulate the plan. He mentioned this was recommended by the ACT 47 Plan. She suggested City Council hold their vote before they know what they are voting on. Bart said not one resident was included on the steering committee. She said most of the industry growth is being constructed in Sugarloaf and Freeland, and they are being left out of this plan. She asked what the public process would be for any amendments that would be added to the plan. Bart feels there was not enough community participation in making this plan. She mentioned the City roads are filled with potholes. Bart said data centers are not conducive to a high-quality of life. She stated rent in the City is over \$2,000/month. Bart stated the City is bringing in jobs that pay \$17.00/hr. She said City families cannot function on these wages.

Nicarol Soto, Berner Ave, Hazleton, spoke of the youth who graduated from college. She said this is a big issue because the youth are moving out of the area. The youth who graduated from colleges do not want to work in warehouses at \$17.00/hr. jobs. She said to have lower crime, the City needs to keep more educated people.

Ondishin asked Soto if warehouse workers are not quality people. Soto said no; Ondishin is misconstruing her words. Soto said the City needs to attract other businesses to the City.

David Dominquez, Hazleton, spoke of the Comprehensive Plan. He said when he was in high school, his teachers told the children to "move out of the area". Dominquez said the area needs to promote more trade jobs, entrepreneurship, and military service.

Dan Lynch said the "dye was already cast" when the City decided to do the Comprehensive Plan. He said the level of disengagement, from the public, is astounding. He stated the City placed the Comprehensive Plan and City budgets, on the City website, for the residents to review.

Dury Martin, Sugarloaf Township resident, said this is his first City Council meeting. He said he relates to the younger generation due to a lot of screen time. Martin said the City needs to have more advertisement to promote the City's issues. He asked if the City is doing this Comprehensive Plan just for a grant. There are other municipalities that need to be heard.

John Zola, Sugarloaf resident, said the City accepts the industries that want to come here, not just warehouses. The City is not keeping the youth, in the area, with warehouse jobs. The City does not

need to give a LERTA to these industries. Zola said the City could get a good tax-base from other companies. Zola said the City needs more recreation. Mayor Cusat said there are 16 parks and playgrounds in the City. He stated growth could be done through recreation.

The Multi-Municipal Comprehensive Plan Public hearing concluded at 7:15 p.m.

***Courtesy of the Floor (ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY): None***

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**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

**ORDINANCES:**

**(1<sup>ST</sup> READING)**

**Ordinance 2026-8**

An Ordinance Amending the City of Hazleton Code of Ordinances to Establish a Residential Reserved Parking Permit Program **(1<sup>st</sup> READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

**On the Question:**

Mayor Cusat said he introduced this program in 2014 and could not get it passed. He stated, every winter, people are fighting for parking spaces. There are more rental units occupying more space. This would be for owner occupied residential properties. Perry mentioned one of the factors that would exclude a resident from obtaining a parking permit would be a driveway. The residents would get approximately 20 feet. Mayor Cusat said if the ordinance is passed, the fee would be \$120.00/year or \$10.00/month. There would be a maximum of eight permits on a City block.

Nilles asked why it states, in the ordinance, under enforcement, "may be subject to citation". Mayor Cusat said this is left up to the discretion of the officer or parking enforcement department.

Perry asked how it would work during a snow ban. Mayor Cusat said the residents would need to move the vehicle but could park back in their spot. He said this would be done more in center city and the northside of the City.

Nilles asked if there would be an additional fee to install the pole and sign. Mayor Cusat stated if there is a pole, then the residents would have to pay for the sign.

Bruno said he was against this ordinance, at first. He stated this is fair to the people who do not have a driveway, garage, and are “sandwiched” by other homes. Mayor Cusat said there are 3,000 owner occupied homes in the City.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

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**ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY ON 1<sup>st</sup> READING**

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**(2<sup>ND</sup> READINGS)**

**Ordinance 2026-7**

An Ordinance Amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Hazleton  
**(2<sup>nd</sup> READING)**

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

**On the Question:**

Atty. Logsdon said there are a few amendments being made to the Code. One amendment is to the Land Bank to determine the members' terms and when their appointments expire.

There is an amendment to the City parking tickets. He said the City magistrates' office is inundated with the traffic tickets. The City will be establishing an administrative hearing process. There is more of a trend to turn it over to the civil side of the law.

Nilles spoke of the City's snow ban tickets. He asked how the residents would be notified if they never received the ticket due to a major snowstorm. Mayor Cusat said there is a requirement that a

letter be sent, to the resident, before the fee goes to the collection agency.

Atty. Logsdon spoke of the SALDO Ordinance. There will be an escrow account added.

Atty. Logsdon said there will be an amendment to the LERTA Chapter with no less than 100 jobs and the expenditure of no less than \$20,000,000 for improvements.

Atty. Logsdon said there will be amendments to the Zoning Chapter, Off-Street Parking, Fee Schedule Adjustments for the ATV Board of Appeals meeting member compensation.

**MOTION TO AMEND:**

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

**MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Roll Call (AS AMENDED):** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

**ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED**

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**RESOLUTIONS:**

**Resolution 2026-25**

A Resolution Amending Resolution 2025-63 and  
Approving the Amended Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2026

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

**On the Question:**

Atty. Logsdon said this is for the Community Development Office.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

**RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**Resolution 2026-26**

A Resolution Awarding the Bid for the Hazleton Streets Improvements  
Project - Phase 1

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Nilles.

**On the Question:**

Mayor Cusat said this includes 1<sup>st</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> Streets. Mayor Cusat stated the total amount came under budget, with the City being able to do extra streets.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

## RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

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### **Resolution 2026-27**

A Resolution Requesting Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Funds for the City of Hazleton's Columbus Court Community Park and Pagnotti Field Project, Phase 1

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Colombo.

#### **On the Question:**

Atty. Logsdon said this is a DCNR grant. Perry asked what the funding amount is. Mayor Cusat stated there will be a couple of phases. He said the total amount is \$6,500,000 and will include a playground, a field, purchase of land, two parking lots, and removing a mountain. He mentioned Phase 1 is for the children's playground.

Mayor Cusat said the City will be "breaking ground" on the Phase II at City View Park's all-inclusive playground.

Atty. Logsdon stated the amount of the grant is \$300,066.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

## RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

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### **Resolution 2026-28**

A Resolution of the City of Hazleton Approving and Adopting the Greater Hazleton Area Thrive 2035 MULTI-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Presented by Perry. Seconded by Ondishin.

#### **On the Question:**

Perry said the warehouses have nothing to do with this plan.

Mayor Cusat said Hailstone has done a great job in compiling this plan.

Perry mentioned people put a lot of work into this plan to help the communities. Mayor Cusat said the last City Comprehensive Plan was implemented in 1988.

**Roll Call:** Bruno-yes; Colombo-yes; Nilles-yes; Ondishin-yes; Perry-yes

### **RESOLUTION PASSES UNANIMOUSLY**

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**New Business:** None

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**Old Business:** None

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**Comments from the Audience:** Richard Wienches, Hazle Township resident, said he goes to the Hazleton Municipal Airport every day. He knows pilots who go out of their way to refuel there. He said the airport building is from the 1950's. Wienches said there is not one thing at the airport that is ADA compliant. He said the bathrooms are not wide enough for the handicapped.

Mayor Cusat said the City has talked about airport planning. He said the plan was to move the airport terminal over and put a hangar in its place. He said he would like to side the building with metal. He mentioned the windows were fixed.

Dee Deakos, 43 Mine Street, Hazleton, spoke of illegal immigration in the City (ICE) program. She said she would like to see the violent criminals "taken away". She said the police should be able to go through the databases and identify the violent criminals.

Nicarol Soto, said the ICE 287 (g) program is not on tonight's agenda, but wants to talk about it. She suggested City Council schedule a TOWN HALL meeting regarding the City's ICE program. She said some residents do not fully understand the program, how it will be implemented, what safeguards are in place, and how it will affect the trust between the community and local authorities. She urges City Council and Mayor Cusat to decide on a time and date on a TOWN HALL.

Fred Waschko, Lincoln & 9<sup>th</sup> Streets, Hazleton, said his neighbor is ruining his life. He is running a mechanic shop and car wash. He said his neighbor has broken several ordinances. Waschko said the police gave him a parking ticket and did not fine his neighbor. He spoke to Charlie Pedri, Diane Panzarella, and Mayor Cusat about this issue. He also has calls into, or spoke to, Dane Watro, Rob Bresnahan, Dave Argall, and State Representative Fetterman. The officials told him it is a federal issue. Waschko said his quality of life has gone down drastically.

Ashley Bart, Hazleton, spoke of **Ordinance 2026-7** - An Ordinance Amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Hazleton. She recommended City Council amend the section which states, "no less than 100 jobs", are kept permanent and local jobs. Bart said city officials are not listening to the residents. She told them not to be surprised when they moved out of the area.

Jessie Bender, Butler Township resident, thanked Mayor Cusat for Tulip Day and the ICE protest in the park. She spoke of the City ICE 287 (g) program. She said the officers will have authority to arrest, without a warrant, if the alien is in the United States in violation of the law. Also, officers could take the alien to ICE-approved facilities. She said these parameters fall outside what was discussed at the last City Council meeting.

Linda Spallone, 620 North Church Street, Hazleton, spoke of the warehouses coming into the City. She said the City youth want these jobs in the warehouses. Spallone said the recruiting signs are in Spanish for recruiting workers for these jobs. She wants to make sure all jobs in the City are fair and equitable for everyone.

Spallone also spoke of the ICE 287 (g) program. She said this is a good program. She said there are a lot of criminals in the City that do not belong here.

David Dominquez, Hazleton, spoke of gratitude for living in Hazleton. He said all the City needs is the right leadership and right choices. He said the ICE 287 (g) program should be reconsidered. Dominquez said this is a City of immigrants. When Mayor Quigley brought people to work in these warehouses, City residents were not happy with the influx of people coming into Hazleton. He mentioned if you commit a crime, they should be deported. He wishes the City would have more thought with regards to how it conducts itself.

Dury Martin, Sugarloaf resident, said it was easy to attend his first City Council meeting.

**Comments from Mayor:** Mayor Cusat thanked Hailstone for all their work in the City Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Cusat said 4,396 people attended the recent Tulip Day with 56,000 tulips and 1,000 potted plants given away. She said Chris and her Van Hoekelen staff did an amazing job.

Mayor Cusat said the Summer Concert Series will be starting on July 11<sup>th</sup> and continue on the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Cusat stated this week, the City garbage picker started this week. This is three years "in the making".

Mayor Cusat said street sweeping continues in the City. He said the City is adding additional streets to the weekly rotation for next year. The City, currently, has four street sweepers.

Mayor Cusat said the City will be paving 1<sup>st</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Streets this year.

Mayor Cusat commended Jessie Bender in organizing the ICE protest. He said there are three options the City could have chosen. He said the three options are: 1. Jail enforcement. 2. Warrant service. 3. Task force. He said the City chose the task force model.

Nilles asked Mayor Cusat for an update on the sink hole at Beech Street playground. Mayor Cusat said the sink hole is about 12 feet deep and the City put a metal plate on top. He said he was working with the engineers this morning on this issue. It is too big of a job for the City to do. The area is at the end of the playground and will only affect the hockey rink.

Mayor Cusat said he was invited to a "Mayors-Fly in Event" at the White House. He was the only one from PA in attendance. This group met with nine deputy secretaries.

**Comments from City Administrator:** Lynch stated he always stresses about public involvement in their City government.

**Comments from Junior Council:** None-absent.

**Comments from Council:** Bruno commended Mayor Cusat for the recent Tulip Day. He said people came from Scranton for the event.

Bruno spoke of the City issue of electric bikes. He said the people are not obeying the laws when riding these bikes. He said the City needs more enforcement on these bikes.

Bruno spoke of the proposed ICE TOWN HALL. He said the last City Council meeting got nasty. He stated one man was very rude to him and his wife when they were trying to explain the program. He said people will be coming just to yell at City Council members if there is a TOWN HALL.

Bruno said the issue with Mr. Waschko's neighbor needs to be resolved.

Bruno said the City's Comprehensive Plan has been going on for four years. He asked how all the people who voiced their concerns, at the meeting tonight, waited until now to speak. Bruno said other municipalities could be "pulled into this program". He asked what other industries will come into the City besides the warehouses. He said all City Council members want to help the City be better. He does not like when people "bash" Mayor Cusat.

Ondishin said everyone needs a job. It does not matter what kind of job it is. The people should not talk badly about the City. Ondishin commended Mayor Cusat for Tulip Day. He thanked Sara Hailstone for the City's Comprehensive Plan presentation.

Colombo thanked Mayor Cusat for Tulip Day and all his work. He thanked Sara Hailstone for her presentation.

Colombo reminded all City residents to be cautious and watch all the children playing outside.

Nilles thanked Sara Hailstone for all her hard work on the City Comprehensive Plan.

Nilles mentioned the City is in the middle of changing their form of government. He said the City needs the warehouse industries, especially for the tax base.

Nilles mentioned City Hall is being renovated with the roof being fixed and renovations to be made in Council Chambers.

Nilles suggested people who want to get involved to join the volunteer fire companies.

Perry thanked all for coming to the meeting. He said the City is a very diverse community. He said the City is growing and it is a great community. He said the City is paving the streets, housing coming into the City, and LERTA options.

Perry commended Mayor Cusat for Tulip Day. He said there are only three cities who have Tulip Day: San Francisco, New York and Hazleton.

**Adjournment:** Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.