



THE CITY OF ERIE

JOSEPH V. SCHEMBER, MAYOR

City Council, Mayor Schember, and state Sen. Dan Laughlin compromise on CRIZ ordinance

Changes made to the Witherspoon-sponsored ordinance in exchange for Council President Nelson removing his ordinance from City Council's agenda

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 1, 2023

Erie, PA – An agreement has been reached on the structure of the local authority that will govern the City of Erie's Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ).

Members of Erie City Council met, on July 31, 2023, with Mayor Joe Schember and his team to discuss next steps regarding the City of Erie's CRIZ ordinance. Council President Chuck Nelson and Councilman Mel Witherspoon, who were present at the meeting, had each previously sponsored a version of the CRIZ ordinance.

Councilman Witherspoon's ordinance established the authority and appointed nine board members with the intent to create a qualified well-rounded board comprised of the various skill sets and expertise needed to effectively and efficiently run the CRIZ. These candidates were identified jointly by Mayor Schember, state Sen. Dan Laughlin, R-49th Dist., their teams, and the Erie business community.

Council President Nelson's ordinance had designated spots to be filled by City Council and Erie's State Representatives, in addition to Mayor Schember and Sen. Laughlin.

As a result of Monday's meeting and conversations with Sen. Laughlin, the parties have agreed to a compromise. The Mayor, Sen. Laughlin, and Councilmen Witherspoon and ordinance co-sponsor Ed Brzezinski agreed to make several changes to the Witherspoon-sponsored ordinance in exchange for Council President Nelson removing his ordinance from the next City Council agenda.

The revised board, along with their respective terms, includes:

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| 1. Emily Aloiz | 2 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 5, 2026 |
| 2. Tony DaBreo | 3 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 4, 2027 |
| 3. Daria Devlin | 3 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 4, 2027 |
| 4. Matthew Good | 4 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 3, 2028 |
| 5. Philip Katen | 2 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 5, 2026 |
| 6. Cathryn Morris-Easterling | 5 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 1, 2029 |
| 7. Roger Richards | 4 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 3, 2028 |



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8. Philip Thomas 1 year; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 6, 2025
9. Matthew Wachter 5 years; Aug. 2, 2023 – Jan. 1, 2029

The parties are now prepared to move forward if Governor Josh Shapiro approves the Erie CRIZ.

“It was a productive meeting, and this is a good path forward,” said Erie Mayor Joe Schember. “If Erie is awarded a CRIZ designation, this will have far-reaching implications for Erie’s future as it will create a sustainable source of funding for economic and community development for decades to come. It was not our intent to leave anyone out of the process, and I am happy that we are working together to make it happen.”

All parties agree that a CRIZ would be beneficial to Erie’s future.

“We all just want what’s best for the City and our residents,” said Witherspoon. “I believe that we can accomplish that by working together.”

Council President Nelson echoed that sentiment.

“In the last two weeks, we came to a consensus by bringing names forward from City Council and the State Representatives,” Nelson said. “Three names were changed from the names originally listed in the in the July 17th op-Ed in the Erie Times-News authored by Mayor Schember and Sen. Laughlin. Those changes increased the number of city residents from five to seven and the representation of racial minorities from one to three. It also gives our State Representatives a non-voting seat at the table alongside the mayor’s and senator’s non-voting seats so that if there needs to be any legislation in Harrisburg to address issues, the representatives will be informed. I am looking forward to taking this step forward together.”

Sen. Laughlin expressed support for and confidence in the process.

“After seven years of vocally advocating for a CRIZ, I am encouraged by the vision, teamwork, and dedication by both the public and private sectors to make this a reality. The CRIZ will be an economic tool to help revitalize the City of Erie. I look forward to continuing down this path together and delivering this incredible tool to Erie.”

Erie City Council will vote on this ordinance at their regularly scheduled meeting on Aug. 2 at 9 a.m.

Media Contact:
Christopher Millette
Communications Director