

January 6, 2016

6:30 P.M. - CONDITIONAL USE HEARING – Constance Mesiarik, 1304 East High Street

Solicitor Garner opened a Conditional Use Hearing on the application of Constance Mesiarik, requesting to establish a psychological service business at the property located at 1304 East High Street and entered several items into exhibit on behalf of Council.

Ms. Mesiarik testified that the services provided would entail no more than two clients and two vehicles at one time. Normal hours of operation would be 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Christopher Rowe testified as the equitable owner of the property, noting there would be no changes to the history of the building.

George Wausnock, owner, also testified that Mr. Rowe is the owner of the State Farm Insurance business.

There was no public comment and the hearing closed at 6:45 p.m.

Solicitor Garner advised that this may be considered at Monday's meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The January 6, 2016 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. by President Weand in the Council Meeting Room, Pottstown Borough Hall, and 100 East High Street, Pottstown, PA.

ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Sheryl Miller, Dennis Arms, Dan Weand, Rita Paez and Joseph Kirkland. Also present were Manager Mark Flanders, Assistant Manager Erica Batdorf, Solicitor Charles Garner, Mayor Sharon Valentine -Thomas and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilor Kulp was absent.

INVOCATION

The invocation was provided by Bishop Everett Debnam.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Infrastructure – Vice President Miller referred to the minutes distributed. She also provided a brief explanation of the processes through the Licensing & Inspections Department regarding inspections. Councilor Miller advised that the four layers of process are the Property Maintenance, Rental Inspections, Building Codes and Engineering. She added that improved and expanded communication is a goal of the Department.

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b. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Ms. Batdorf reported on the Polar Bear Plunge of January 1st and the upcoming River Walk on the Schuylkill River Trail. Ms. Batdorf also reminded all of the upcoming *In-Focus* event and requested submissions.

c. Transportation – Ms. Batdorf reported that the Airport Consultant RFQ is due this week and will be brought before Council in the next few months.

d. Ricketts Community Center/OBGC – Councilor Kirkland advised that a report will be provided at the regular meeting.

e. Pottstown School Board – Ron Williams reported on the progress of replacing Superintendent Dr. Jeff Sparagana. He also noted that the Walking School bus project is working well at Rupert School.

f. Ad hoc Zoning, Animal & Bicentennial Committees – Vice President Miller reviewed the requirements of new Ordinance No. 2143 regarding the safety of animals. She added that local police departments will be required to report animal related crimes to the FBI in correlation with annual reporting of domestic violence incidents. Ms. Miller also recognized the need for a certified Animal Control Officer. This along with new kennel fees are being established through the Safety Committee.

Vice President Miller also reported that a public hearing regarding the conditional use criteria is scheduled for February.

PRESENTATIONS – POLICE DEPARTMENT PROMOTIONS

Chief Drumheller, along with Mayor Thomas, Bishop Debnam presented promotions to members of the Police Department.

Corporal Mark Boyce was promoted to the position of Sergeant in the presence of his family and fellow officers. Mayor Thomas read and presented the order.

Officer Steven Morrissey was promoted to the position of Corporal in the presence of his family and fellow officers. Mayor Thomas read and presented the order.

PRESENTATION – POTTSTOWN CRITERIUM

Dawn Gulick was present as the organizer of the July 10, 2016 Criterium bicycle event through the downtown. Ms. Gulick advised that this is the first such event in 10 years in the Borough. She added that she has been working with Administrative staff, the Police Department and Steve Bamford. Ms. Gulick explained the map of the kilometer race, the category of participants and the request for street closures.

President Weand advised that this would be listed for approval on the regular agenda.

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PRESENTATION – HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Diana Rivera O’Bryant was present to outline the requests of the Human Relations Commission. She advised that the Commission is seeking an update of the ordinance to allow for investigative and enforcement powers needed to do their job. Ms. O’Bryant also requested that the Commission be provided a secure space or location to have an official mailing address, a working phone system and approval of submitted budget.

PDIDA - FARM

Manager Flanders referred to the request of Sheila Dugan and PDIDA to relocate the already approved Farmer’s Market project. She is requesting that the events be moved from the Reading Lot to the 200 block of High Street.

RFQ – AIRPORT CONSULTANT

Ms. Batdorf advised that the RFQ’s to choose a consultant for the Airport will be opened and reviewed on January 8th. No action will be required until the Transportation Committee meets and reviews the proposals.

CAROUSEL LEASE

Solicitor Garner advised that in 2005, the present facility was leased to the Carousel. The requirement at the time was to have the Carousel open for the public by the end of 2015.

Terry Jones, Carousel Board member, was present and requested an extension to guarantee the opening and operation of the Carousel. He noted that by April 1st the building will be renovated and open, due in part by additional County funding.

George Wausnock, President, was also present and explained that the restoration of the Carousel was totally done by volunteers.

These items will be listed on Monday’s agenda.

FLOODPLAIN ORDINANCE

Solicitor Garner advised that the process of adopting a new floodplain ordinance began in 2011. He added that the ordinance is now in final form and it is the requirement of DCED for all municipalities to have a new ordinance in place by March 2016.

President Weand noted the ordinance will be listed for consideration at the regular agenda.

ZONING – OBGC, 658 BEECH STREET

Solicitor Garner explained the zoning relief application of the Olivet Boys & Girls Club to install signage and allow seasonal banners.

Councilor Kirkland recommended that this matter be forwarded to the Zoning Hearing Board for resolution.

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SALE OF BOROUGH VEHICLES

Manager Flanders referred to the list of Borough vehicles to be sold and awarded as recommended on the January 5th bid tabulation.

TAX COLLECTOR APPOINTMENT

President Weand advised that a request for the appointment of the Tax Collector position has been received by Roy Reifsnyer.

Solicitor Garner advised that based on the resignation of the Tax Collector elect, the Borough Code requires Council to fill the vacancy within 30 days, by formal resolution for the two-year term. He added that requirements include a residence affidavit, ability to post bond and to take the oath of office.

BREW FEST

Mr. Flanders reviewed the request of Tim Hennessey to conduct the first annual Firkin Fest, tentatively scheduled for April 30th and the second annual Brew Fest, scheduled for October 22nd in Memorial Park. He added that Mr. Hennessey will be here Monday evening to further explain these events. Mr. Flanders also advised that a Ferkin is a smaller keg, ¼ size of a normal keg, used for specialty and tasting brews.

BOARD VACANCIES

President Weand reviewed the vacancies and board positions to be addressed at the regular Council meeting. He also explained the process of the Blighted Property Committee for the benefit of the audience.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

Sheila Dugan, 71 North Hanover Street – provided a verbal report on the holiday events. She added that she is in the process of forming a holiday committee for 2016 and is seeking volunteers. Ms. Dugan advised that PDIDA is in support of the Criterium race and requested Council's support of the FARM.

COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Procsal advised that his goal for 2016 is to increase homeownership in the Borough.

Councilor Miller also hoped for increased homeownership throughout the Borough, with some work already in progress. She will be sponsoring two home-buyers' seminars, along with Matt Green, Glocker Real Estate and Brandon Moore, Rockhill Financial at the Phillies Fire Company on April 2nd. Reduced fees will be offered for first responders.

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Councilor Miller also suggested improved communications with citizens and forming a Citizen Leadership Academy. She also announced a *Rock the Block* event in coordination with Habitat for Humanity, an initiative to rehabilitate the 400 block of Walnut Street.

Councilor Arms requested increased communications. He also expressed a concern regarding last year's street sweeping and suggesting getting references prior to awarding this year's bid.

Councilor Paez agreed that there needs to be less houses for sale and to remind all that Council is elected by the people and works for the people.

Councilor Kirkland requested a better working relationship with the Pottstown landlords.

President Weand stated that his goal for 2016 would be to attract 100 jobs with family sustaining wages.

Mayor Thomas advised that good citizenship is everyone's responsibility and she also welcomed Ms. Mesiarik to the community and recommended a partnership with the School District. Mayor Thomas commented on the requests of the Human Relations Commission, noted that a working relationship with the YWCA may be an option. She also welcomed the Criterium Race, a door to bringing people into the Borough.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned 8:25 p.m.

Attested,

Mark D. Flanders
Borough Manager