

June 21, 2016

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL
POTTSTOWN SCHOOL BOARD JOINT MEETING

The Joint Meeting of the Pottstown Borough Council and the Pottstown School Board was called to order on Tuesday, June 21, 2016 at 7:20 p.m. at the Montgomery County Community College – Innovation Sustainability Hub, 140 College Drive, Pottstown, PA.

Councilors present were Dan Weand, Sheryl Miller, Dennis Arms, Ryan Procsal, Carol Kulp and Rita Paez. Also present were Borough Manager Mark Flanders, Assistant Manager Erica Batdorf, Mayor Sharon Valentine-Thomas, Parks & Recreation Director Michael Lenhart and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach.

Present for the School Board were Thomas Hylton, Polly Weand, Ron Williams and Kurt Heidel. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana, Business Administrator Linda Adams, Solicitor Stephen Kalis, Director of Community Relations John Armato and Administrative Assistant Joanne Rhoads.

WELCOME

Dr. Sparagana welcomed all and introduced Dr. David DiMattio, Vice President of the West Campus of the Montgomery County Community College.

Dr. DiMattio, welcomed all and provided a tour of the new Innovation Hub, including the Argoonics, Hydroponics and Aquaponics laboratories.

Dr. Sparagana provided a brief update on the 2016 graduation and student accomplishments. He advised that the Pottstown Promise for Early College Education program now has 54 students with \$250,000 in costs covered by the Pottstown Foundation for Education. He also advised that there will be no increase in taxes in the 2016-2017 budget.

UPDATES – Erica Batdorf

Walk & Bike Pottstown - Assistant Borough Manager, Erica Batdorf, provided an update on the Walk & Bike Pottstown initiative. She explained the bike boulevards and changes to traffic patterns and parking regulations in several streets including North York and Johnson Streets and in the areas of the elementary schools. Ms. Batdorf advised that the project is awaiting approvals from PennDOT with construction possibly beginning in spring 2017. The project will also connect to the High Street bike lanes and the Schuylkill River Trail.

Traffic Safety Town Program – Ms. Batdorf advised that the Greater Valley Forge Transportation chose Pottstown as the pilot for this program. She noted that she worked with Officer Unruh of the Pottstown Police Department to provide demonstrations to elementary school students regarding safety measures and procedures while riding bikes, crossing streets and obeying traffic signs. Ms. Batdorf also announced that all equipment was provided to the School District for future events and acknowledged the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness for its contribution.

Pottstown InFocus – Ms. Batdorf reviewed the successful week of events during the Pottstown InFocus Festival which occurred from June 6th through June 10th.

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Memorial Park – Phase 3 – Michael Lenhart, Director of Parks & Recreation provided an update on the improvement projects to Memorial Park. The improvements include replacement of playground equipment at the Fountain of Youth Spray Park and would be largely funded through three grants, including a grant from the Health and Wellness foundation. He added that Justin Keller, Regional Recreation Coordinator, has been instrumental in seeking a \$233,000 Pennsylvania DCNR, C2P2 grant. The total project cost is \$500,000 with the time line of April 2018.

PAID ANNUAL REPORT – Steve Bamford

Steve Bamford, Executive Director of the Pottstown Area Industrial Development, provided the 2015 Annual Report for PAID. Mr. Bamford reviewed the six goals established in the reorganization of PAID in 2010, which included reuse of underused industrial and downtown property, recruit new business investments, a marketing campaign, access to capital for small and medium sized businesses, re-establishment of passenger rail service and obligate resources for economic development purposes. Mr. Bamford reported that during 2015, private investments to the 100 and 200 blocks of High Street, totaled \$4.3 million.

Mr. Bamford also provided an outline of the Keystone Employment & Economic Plan (KEEP) for the development of property located on Keystone Boulevard and College Drive and partially located in West Pottsgrove Township. He reported on the progress of growing companies, such as Precision Polymer Products, VideoRay, Cody Systems and Ultralex. He also announced the opening of the new Vist Bank at the Vist Insurance Office, 258 High Street.

Mr. Bamford reported that PAID continues to advocate the reestablishment of passenger rail to the area, noting that the plan lacks capital funding. He also publicly acknowledged the award of a \$150,000 grant from the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation for the operations of PAID. Mr. Bamford also referred to the Audit Statements and the Business Inventory included in the report. He acknowledged that several employers were not included in the EIT reports previously reviewed but will be investigated and corrected in the near future. Mr. Bamford also provided an update on the Carousel, the Colebrookdale Railroad platform and the Keim Street Bridge.

LERTA

Mr. Flanders provided a status of the LERTA initiative. He advised that a substantive plan has been agreed upon with the County, School District and the Borough. Mr. Flanders noted that the required public hearing is tentatively scheduled for the July 11th Council meeting and the School Board may act at its July 28th meeting and a presentation to County in August. He also noted that an increased incentive may be added to participants agreeing to employ local residents.

Attorney Kalis added that this language is included in the draft resolution of the School District.

REGIONAL PLANNING – LETTER OF SUPPORT

President Weand noted that with a duly required quorum of Borough Council, he explained the request of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee for a letter of support for 3 grant applications that will be submitted through the State Department of Commerce and Economic Development's Commonwealth Financing Agency. The applications are for the following proposals:

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1. Lower Pottsgrove, Gerald Richards Park - Athletic field rehabilitation and stormwater improvements
2. Douglass Township, Douglass Park, Rehabilitation - Phase 2
3. Pottstown, Playground Replacement and Site Access Improvements

Councilor Procsal moved to authorize a letter of support for the above stated projects. Councilor Arms seconded the motion.

President Weand opened a public hearing at 8:50 p.m. as this was not listed on the agenda. Hearing none, he closed the hearing at 8:51 p.m.

David Kraybill, Executive Director of the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness, commented that the statistics for obese children and obese children living in poverty were provided by the 2013 needs assessment, which is also available on the website.

Motion carried: 6 ayes.

RESOLUTION – DR. JEFFREY SPARAGANA

Councilor Arms moved to adopt a Resolution honoring Dr. Jeffrey Sparagana for 23 years of Dedicated Service to the Pottstown School District and the Borough of Pottstown. Councilor Kulp seconded the motion.

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-19

RECOGNIZING DR. JEFFREY R. SPARAGANA FOR TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE BOROUGH OF POTTSTOWN

Manager Flanders read and presented the Resolution to Dr. Sparagana.

Motion carried: 6 ayes.

Dr. Sparagana thanked all for their time and efforts in making Pottstown a greater town and a great School District.

ROUND TABLE

Councilor Arms questioned the status of the Crossing Guards situation.

Manager Flanders commented that state law requires that the Police Department of the municipality is required to provide crossing guards. He added that the Solicitor is reviewing the draft agreement. Mr. Flanders agree to provide statistics on the number of times police officers were required to perform the duty in a crossing guards' absence.

Councilor Miller apologized that a July 4th parade was not possible this year and noted that a committee of two cannot raise enough money to fund a parade. She suggested a committee of

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members of Council and the School Board be formed to oversee a committee or collaboration for future July 4th events.

Councilor Miller also noted that she was the only person in attendance that testified at the Zoning Hearing in opposition of the variances requested by the Cluster. She did not oppose the stated mission of the Cluster, only to the expansion of proposed social services, in a town inundated with centralized low income housing and client based social services.

Mr. Hylton advised that the School District is seeking two administrators and explained the \$10,000 incentive for school district employees for buying a home in the Borough. He recommended that this offer be made to police officers as well.

Mr. Flanders also provided a status update on the First Baptist Church steeple repairs, which may result in the demolition of a portion of the steeple. He also reported the progress of Community Champions, noting that presently 213 properties are registered and advised that the two-year cycle of registering rental properties is progressing with 1,699 units inspected and reinspected as of last week.

Mr. Hylton praised the efforts of Mr. Flanders and Dr. Sparagana for holding these joints meetings.

Mayor Thomas commented on the problems of having school children left at the police station when abandoned at school facilities and suggested finding an alternate site. She also spoke on scholarships for top students and questioned if the awards are public records.

Dr. Sparagana commented that he did not have specific statistics but all avenues are pursued regarding financial support.

Mayor Thomas added that she will be working with parents to find financial assistance. She also commented on sexual improprieties between staff and students in certain school districts and suggested advanced intervention.

Solicitor Kalis agreed to provide the School Board's adopted policy on this matter.

Mayor Thomas also supported the per capita option in reference to the July 4th parade as it is a regional event.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 27, 2016 with the location to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Submitted by,

Mark D. Flanders
Borough Manager