

January 22, 2018

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 Monday, January 22, 2018 at 7:35 p.m. at the Pottstown High School Cafeteria Room, 750 North Washington Street, Pottstown, PA.

Councilors present were Dan Weand, Carol Kulp, Ryan Procsal, Donald Lebedynsky, Dennis Arms and Rita Paez. Also present were Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Interim Borough Manager Justin Keller, Finance Director Janice Lee, and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach.

Present for the School Board were Amy Francis, Katina Bearden, Kurt Heidel, Susan Lawrence, W. Ron Williams, John Armato and Raymond Rose. Also present were Superintendent Stephen Rodriguez, Business Administrator Maureen Jampo and Administrative Assistants Diane Nash and Joanne Rhoads.

WELCOME

Superintendent Stephen Rodriguez welcomed all to the Pottstown High School.

Interim Borough Manager Justin Keller introduced Jon Leshner and Donna Fabry, Montgomery County Planning Commission, to present the final draft of the Sustainability Plan.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Jon Leshner, Montgomery Planner and Manager of the Sustainability Plan, provided a brief history of sustainability plans for various boroughs and townships. Mr. Leshner advised that this is the first Joint School District/Borough sustainability plan in the State of Pennsylvania to his knowledge.

Donna Fabry, Community Planner for Montgomery County, presented the final draft of the Sustainability Plan in order to continue the implementation of the plan. She outlined the major elements and goals of the plan, which are principles, vision statement, goals and actions. The principles of the plan include connected communities, education and infrastructure. Ms. Fabry also noted that the purpose of the plan is to organize efforts of the School District and the Borough, with the vision Statement that Pottstown Borough strives to improve the quality of life for all community members.

Ms. Fabry highlighted the reuse of the former Fecera's furniture store, converted into apartment units and the green parking lot at the Schuylkill River Heritage Area. She added that the Plan will be a helpful tool in submitting grant applications. Ms. Fabry noted that the Montco 2040 grant funding has been increased to \$1.5 million and will be supporting implementation for Walk/Montco and Bike/Montco plans and downtown community destinations and adaptation and resiliency plans. She added that a community event will be planned in the spring to highlight the Sustainability Plan. Ms. Fabry requested and recommended the adoption of the Plan by both boards.

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School Board/Sustainability Plan – Director Williams moved to adopt the December 7, 2017 Pottstown Sustainability Plan as presented. Vice President Bearden seconded the motion.

President Francis requested a roll-call vote.

Armato	yes	Lawrence	yes
Bearden	yes	Rose	yes
Francis	yes	Williams	yes
Heidel	yes		

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

Council/Sustainability Plan - Councilor Procsal moved to adopt the December 7, 2017 Pottstown Sustainability Plan as presented. Councilor Paez seconded the motion.

Councilor Arms expressed a concern regarding the amount of money spent on plans and accepting grants and with no money to carry out these plans. He added that the Borough is facing a 12% tax increase.

President Weand requested a roll-call vote.

Arms	no	Paez	no
Kulp	yes	Procsal	yes
Lebedynsky	yes	Weand	yes

Motion carried: 4 ayes, 2 nays.

### ROTARY TREE NURSERY PROJECT

Deb Penrod, Pottstown Rotary, announced the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Pottstown Rotary, with a Gala event scheduled for February 10<sup>th</sup>. She highlighted the projects of the International Rotary Club, including the new flags for the July 4, 2016 parade, the WWI memorial and the establishment of the Little Free Library. Ms. Penrod added that Peace, Literacy and Economic and Community Development are the main efforts and goals of the local Rotary. Ms. Penrod introduced Tom Hylton to outline the project of the Rotary Tree Nursery, proposed to coincide with Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, with 100 Rotary members expected to plant a tree for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Thomas Hylton provided a framework of a municipal nursery on the Pottstown High School grounds, to be located behind the PCTV office, a macadam area, formerly a basketball court. He added that there is an existing water line that could be used for irrigation at a cost of no more than \$150 per year. Mr. Hylton's request is the use of the land from the School District at no cost to the District. He also advised that it would be approximately 5 years until the trees could be relocated, possible for street trees, school district or park properties. Mr. Hylton also introduced Janet Freedline, who has experience with trees and nurseries and has volunteered to assist in the maintenance of the trees.

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### PAID UPDATE

Peggy Lee-Clark, Executive Director of the Pottstown Area Industrial Development, provided the update of progress of PAID. She advised that the Audit will be provided within the next few weeks. Ms. Lee-Clark advised that there were approximately 97 potential employment opportunities in 2017. She advised that Cedarville Engineering currently has 35 employees and expects to have approximately 50 in 2018. In addition, Cedarville Engineering is in full partnership with the BB&T Bank, 159 East High Street, utilizing the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors.

Ms. Lee-Clark highlighted the KEEP (Keystone Employment and Economic Plan) project, a joint venture with West Pottsgrove Township for the Keystone Boulevard, with the expectation of Keystone Boulevard to eventually be connected to the Stowe Interchange. She added that a presentation will be made to Council at the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Lee-Clark also announced that Pottstown was one of 248 applicants for the Amazon satellite location, but not chosen as a finalist. Two Pennsylvania finalist are Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.

Ms. Lee-Clark advised that PAID has funded two ongoing feasibility studies for highly technical work forces. PAID has also collaborated with PDIDA and Hobart's Run with incentives to engage the community and businesses. She also highlighted the "I Pick Pottstown" initiative and new businesses in the area.

### LAND BANK ORDINANCE

Mr. Keller explained the economic development incentive of the Land Bank program. He noted that this incentive is geared towards residential more so than commercial with the purpose of acquiring, maintaining and eventually disposing of the blighted or abandoned properties, while extinguishing liens against the properties. Mr. Keller advised that the Borough has consulted with Branton Strategies for the process of the Land Bank program. Mr. Keller also reviewed the draft Land Bank principles and policies. He advised that currently the Interim Board is the existing Blighted Property Review Committee and the permanent Board will be appointed by Council, along with the Policy and Procedures. Mr. Keller commented that the main goals of the program are to convert properties into owner-occupied market rate housing units and retail, commercial and industrial activities, including mixed-use development. Mr. Keller also explained the 50% tax incentive for 5 years. He added that the next step is to draft an intergovernmental agreement between the County, School District and Borough.

Mr. Rodriguez advised that the School District's Solicitor will be working with the Borough's Solicitor towards the agreement and will then proceed with the County.

President Francis noted that the Land Bank has been discussed previously and the Board is in favor of moving forward.

### WALK/BIKE POTTSTOWN & SCHUYLKILL RIVER TRAIL

Mr. Keller provided an update on the Walk/Bike Pottstown project, advising that the sidewalk replacement, Phase 3, is near completion. Phases I & II, the line striping improvements, should begin in the spring, with a completion date of summer 2018. Mr. Keller advised that there is

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a need for education regarding the system and has been working with the School District and the Police Department, along with the Greater Valley Forge Management Association towards a grant from the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation to educate adults and children. A real-life bike rodeo is being planned on the bike lanes. Mr. Keller advised that in 2017, the Borough was recognized with an honorable mention from the Bike League of America as a Bike-Friendly community. He noting that a lack of adult bicycle education was noted as a deficiency in the plan, adding that achieving a bronze certification is a goal for the future. Mr. Keller also noted that upgrades to the bike racks will be considered and explained the Federal Highway Administration's standards for guiderails on the trails.

#### ROUND TABLE

A brief round table discussion took place with comments from the Board members and Council members.

Mr. Armato requested that electronic versions of the presentations be distributed to both boards.

Mr. Williams urged that representation at each board meeting be continued at the public meetings.

Mr. Decker announced the spring musical production of the *Little Mermaid*, scheduled for the first two weekends in March.

President Weand and President Francis thanked all for attending and for the excellent presentations.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m. on motion by Mr. Williams.

Submitted by,

Justin M. Keller  
Interim Borough Manager