

February 7, 2018

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The February 7, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Weand in the Council Meeting Room, Pottstown Borough Hall, 100 East High Street, Pottstown, PA.

ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Carol Kulp, Donald Lebedynsky, Dennis Arms, Dan Weand, Rita Paez and Joseph Kirkland. Also present were Interim Manager Justin Keller, Solicitor Charles Garner, Mayor Stephanie Henrick and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach.

INVOCATION

President Weand requested a moment of silence.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Infrastructure – Councilor Kulp noted that through grants, Phase 3 of Memorial Park project should be completed in the spring. She added that tests are ongoing for Pollock Park. Councilor Kulp also reported that Licensing & Inspections are on the second cycle of bi-annual rental inspections and noted that property transfers have increased. She also advised that the Closed Loop project is continuing.

b. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Interim Manager Keller reported that a CDBG grant was received in the amount of \$200,000 for the replacement of the Ricketts Center Roof and HVAC. He added that the EIP grant is being drafted for submission and will be sent to the Financial Sustainability Oversight Committee for review with the expectation of implementation within the next 6-12 months. Mr. Keller also reported that a Montco 2040 grant is being submitted to fund the Walk/Bike connection to the Schuylkill River Trail. He also noted that the KEEP plan is close to being finalized with a presentation expected Monday evening.

c. Transportation – There was no meeting.

d. OBGC/Ricketts Community Center – Councilor Kirkland advised that the report was distributed.

e. Pottstown School Board – There was no report.

f. Library – There was no report.

g. Ad hoc Zoning – There was no meeting.

h. Ad hoc Animal – Councilor Kirkland advised that there was no report.

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i. Safety – Chief Drumheller advised that citizens were well behaved during the Eagles celebrations throughout the Borough barring a few fireworks displays.

j. Emergency Services Reports – Miles Feather provided a written report highlighting firefighting training and fund raising, including the upcoming Beef & Beer night scheduled for April 28th. He also advised that the Explorer and Juniors training continues. Mr. Feather reported that the Phillies will be participating in the Polar Bear Plunge and the Bonfire on February 17th and the Community Mixer on February 21st at 107 High Street.

Chief Lessar advised that he forwarded the 2017 Annual report to Council with one error. The debt service is \$150,000 not over \$1 million. He provided the statistics for January and thanked Council for its continued support.

k. Human Relations Commission – There was no report.

l. Ad Hoc Financial Sustainability Oversight Committee – Ms. Lee reviewed the report distributed and approved by the Committee. She advised that from the three meetings of the Committee, the recommendations were to not reopen the 2018 budget due to the lack of timing to make any significant changes to the General Fund and to retain the 12% tax increase. She added that the committee will continue to meet and in an effort to cut costs, Wednesday night hours will be eliminated to reduce heat and electricity in the building and avoid overtime costs. In addition, it was recommended that the Finance Director and a Council member be included in contract negotiations, along with the goal of a cashless system for tax and utility payments.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Henrick reported that she attended the Art Fusion Soup event, the Pottstown Community Action meeting, Steel River Playhouse fundraiser and a Rotary Club meeting. She added that the Rotary partnered with Tom Hylton on the project of planting 100 trees at the Pottstown High School. Mayor Henrick also announced several upcoming events including a Genesis tax preparation event, Hobarts Run free home buying seminar and the Habitat for Humanity home repair workshop at Art Fusion. She also reported on the Montco Happening business voting event and encouraged all to vote. The Mayor also announced that the Olivet Boys and Girls Club offers youth programs Monday through Friday at a cost of \$15 per year.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Interim Manager Keller provided an update on the Pollock Park remediation. He advised that a public meeting was held on the results of the Phase II environmental assessment. He added that an application was submitted for a Brownfields assessment grant and a meeting will be scheduled with the DEP. Mr. Keller also reviewed the cost saving efforts of the Borough to include the elimination of Wednesday evening hours. He added the Parks and Recreation Borough newsletter will be posted on the website in electronic format with one last printed version scheduled for April. Mr. Keller also reported that registration is open for the next Citizens Leadership Academy to begin March 13th.

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VETERANS' ISLAND PROJECT

Cathy Paretti spoke on behalf of the Veterans' Island Project at Memorial Park to enhance and possibly develop the island at the Park and dedicate it to the Veterans. She reported that through the efforts of the Elks Committee and the Pottstown Hospital, the lights at the WWII memorial have been replaced. Ms. Paretti is working with the Lions Club, the Rotary and Parks and Recreation Department to enhance tourism at the Park and presented a check to the Borough in the amount of \$1,985.

READING GRAVITY RACING – JULY 15, 2018

John King was present and explained the history of the Reading Gravity Racing Club, which was established in 1964. Mr. King requested Council's approval to close High Street on July 15, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

PRESENTATION – PDIDA – FARM 2018, VEGAN FEST & PET FAIR

Sheila Dugan referred to the outline of upcoming events and requested the use of the Clock Tower area for the FARM events. She added that through a \$15,000 grant from the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation, PDIDA will continue with the FARM on the second and fourth Thursday of each month.

Bill Sharon provided information on the September 15th eighth annual Pet Fair. He noted that 20 vendors have reserved space to date.

Caitlin Mercer announced the first Vegan Festive previously scheduled for May 5th and may be rescheduled due to another festival on the same date.

FIRE PROTECTION ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Fire Chief Lessar presented several changes being considered for new construction regarding sprinkler and fire alarm requirements and the fire protection systems. He advised that the changes would affect only new construction and not any current operating businesses and would increase the bare minimum of safety requirements. This proposal would initially require State approval and would then require Council's approval. Chief Lessar noted that applicants can deduct sprinkler systems over several years in their taxes reporting.

BARK FOR LIFE – BEER GARDEN

Mr. Keller explained the request of the Bark for Life Committee requesting to hold a beer garden at the April 28th event in Memorial Park.

CONDITIONAL USE – 55 EAST HIGH STREET

Solicitor Garner referred to the draft order approving the request of Taquitha Phillips as presented at the January 8th Conditional Use Hearing.

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WENDY'S SUBDIVISION PLAN, 234 SHOEMAKER ROAD

Solicitor Garner reviewed the recommendations of the Planning Commission and advised that Wendy's has increased its Fee in Lieu of contribution from \$15,000 to \$20,000 for the Borough's use for possible sidewalk and pathway improvements or to spend as Council sees appropriate. He added that the applicant is not the owner of the property where sidewalk is to be installed.

Mr. Keller added that there may be an issue with PennDOT's Right of Way, which may need a Highway Occupancy Permit.

COLEBROOKDALE RAILROAD – MINOR SUBDIVISION ANNEXATION

Solicitor Garner explained the prior approvals for a waiver of the Land Development process and the conceptual Land Swap agreement for an exchange of property for a portion of the Park to be used as the station, wherein the borough would get a portion of the Colebrookdale railroad property for purposes of the trail system. The actual agreement has not yet been finalized, which should include a minor subdivision to create parcels that will be annexed to each owner's interest. Solicitor Garner noted that the applicant has requested that Council approve the plan moving forward by waiving the 30-60-day planning review period.

ZONING

Solicitor Garner referred to the zoning relief request of the Hancock Building Associates for the property located at 625 North Charlotte Street for the installation of an electronic sign with changeable messages. The sign exceeds the maximum square footage allowed under the Borough ordinance.

Mr. Arms requested a letter be sent to the Zoning Hearing Board in opposition of the size of the sign due to the negative aesthetics and possible distraction issues.

President Weand advised that these items would be listed on the regular agenda.

LAWN MAINTENANCE BIDS

Mr. Keller reviewed the bids received and noted that one bid has already been withdrawn due to numerical errors. Staff will provide the recommendations for Monday evening.

PARK REGULATIONS AMENDMENTS

Michael Lenhart reviewed several proposed amendments to clarify regulations, hours and accesses of the Borough parks. He noted that these regulations come under the enforcement of the Police Department.

Councilor Arms requested that the use of distributing food and clothing in public parks be prohibited in the parks.

Mr. Lenhart requested that this matter be reviewed by the Solicitor.

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Solicitor Garner commented that he will research and provide the draft language to Council prior to any advertisement of the ordinance amendment.

MONTCO 2040 RESOLUTION

Mr. Keller referred to the draft resolution to be submitted to the County to help fund the Walk/Bike construction and would be seeking \$135,000 from the County with a match of \$27,000, which is already in place.

NON-UNIFORM PENSION ANNUAL REPORT

Ms. Lee explained the report distributed, which is an annual requirement under the ordinance.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Keller reviewed the open board positions and requested that submitted applications be considered for Monday evening.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

Sheila Dugan thanked the Fire Chief and Fire Department for their efforts on the fire adjacent to her home on February 6th.

COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Mayor Henrick thanked all who contributed to the safety of a homeless gentleman in the Borough, known as Ed, and eventually resulted in his moving into an apartment in the Borough.

President Weand complemented all members of the Financial Sustainability Oversight Committee for their efforts and praised the Finance Director and Staff during the budgeting process.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Weand recessed the meeting to executive session at 8:30 p.m. for one item of personnel.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Attested,

Justin M. Keller
Interim Borough Manager