

June 7, 2023

ANNOUNCEMENT

Borough Manager Keller explained the format for this evening's meeting, advising that the meeting is a public in-person and a GoTo Meeting and available on-line as well. Public comments are being accepted through email and chat until 7:05 p.m. and will be announced to all. Comments are limited to 300 words to be in compliance with Council's three-minute rule and participants shall be identified accordingly.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The June 7, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with President Weand in the Chair.

INVOCATION

President Weand requested a moment of silence.

ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Lisa Vanni, Trenita Lindsay (virtual), Dan Weand, Andrew Monastra and Joseph Kirkland (virtual). Also present were Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Borough Manager Justin Keller (virtual), Solicitor Charles Garner (virtual) and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilor Lebedynsky was absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC HEARING – PART FARE INCREASE, Kourtney High, Grants Administrator

Ms. High explained the requirement to hold a public hearing for rate increases every two years. Due to COVID, the fares have not been raised since 2018. She noted that the fares will increase as follows: base fare from \$2.25 to \$2.50; half-fare \$1.10 to \$1.25; transfers from \$.75 to \$1.00 and Paratransit from \$4.50 - \$5.00.

a. Philip Thees, 63 South Evans Street – commented that he hopes the increases are sufficient to mirror the high price of gasoline and questioned if the Borough can afford to keep running the bus lines.

The public hearing closed at 7:05 p.m.

PRESENTATION – MONTGOMERY COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY KEVIN R. STEELE

District Attorney Kevin Steele was present to introduce new public safety and economic collaborative and community crime prevention. He also introduced Assistant District Attorney Gabby Hughes. Attorney Steele provided the statistics regarding the increase in the use of firearms being used for homicides and other crimes in Montgomery County. He also advised that in 2022, there were 19 homicides with a 94% clearance on the cases. Attorney Steele introduced the new NIBIN (National Integrated Ballistic Information Network) and ShotSpotter Programs used to

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identify and target shooters and its sources of crime guns. The NIBEN network has over 6 million pieces of ballistic evidence stored in its database nationwide.

Attorney Steele also explained the technology of ShotSpotter, which detects gunshots in public places and provides the location address and geographically coordinates to police. It will cover two square miles. This will also distinguish between a gunshot and other sounds such as fireworks, car backfiring, etc. He also explained the delay in negotiations from PECO due to the number of polls needed. He may need assistance from the municipalities, as the two-year grant time is running. This information will be made public in an attempt to deter criminal activity in the Borough.

President Weand noted that Borough Council will do what is needed to accelerate this project.

PRESENTATION – DWIGHT CITY GROUP, 276-284 NORTH HANOVER STREET

Judah Angster, CEO, Dwight City Group, was present to introduce the concept plan of a residential unit facility to be located on the property of 276-284 North Hanover Street. Also present was Architect Jake Reisman. Mr. Angster explained that the 1890, 120,000 square foot building, would be converted to an 85 unit, one and two bedroom apartments. He provided renderings of the apartments, with new and modern amenities, while maintaining the historic features of the building. Mr. Angster also advised that the proposal would include parking for 85 vehicles, with the idea of the tenants having only one or no vehicles. He noted that the proposed tenants would most likely be single and work remotely from home and be within walking distance of rail lines, bus lines, schools and churches. Mr. Angster agreed to provide on site visits to Council for Dwight City's completed projects.

Solicitor Garner commented that the proposal will go before the Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board for at least a parking variance. There will be no action for Council at this time.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – The report was in the packet.
- b. Transportation – There was no meeting.
- c. Efficient Methods Committee – There was no report in Councilor Lebedynsky's absence.
- d. Ordinance Review Committee – Councilor Procsal had nothing new to report.
- e. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Ms. Lee-Clark advised that the American Keg facility is moving its operations to Tennessee, despite efforts of herself and other elected officials. She is working with the Montgomery County Workforce program to located jobs for the 5 remaining employees, 2 engineers and 1 controller. Ms. Lee-Clark also reported that several smaller businesses have opened with the assistance of County grants for veteran or women owned businesses. She also advised that PAED would focus on one company for the sidewalk cleaning for 4-5 days per week.

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President Weand tentatively offered the Borough's power washer to businesses if appropriate.

Ms. Lee-Clark commented that certain businesses would appreciate the offer.

BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Land Bank – Ms. Lee-Clark noted that 208 Gable Avenue is completed and has been sold to a private developer. She is expecting settlement on the properties located on Queen Street, Hale Street and Chestnut Street.

b. Emergency Services Report – Chief Hand advised that the reports are in the packet.

c. Human Relations Commission – Ms. Levengood advised the June is pride month and celebrates the LGBTQ events. Fathers' Day is June 18th and Juneteenth is June 19th. The next meeting is June 13th in Borough Hall. She also noted that the HRC contact and other information is posted on the Borough's website.

d. Library – Ms. Lipsky will provide a written report to the Council.

e. Ricketts Community Center – Councilor Kirkland expects to have a report for the regular meeting.

f. Pottstown School District – Councilor Lindsay advised that the Pottstown High School and Middle School bands partnered for the Memorial Day Parade for the first time. She also reported on today's event in Harrisburg to address Fair Funding for Schools. Councilor Lindsay noted that it was disturbing that not more Pottstown residents joined in the event in Harrisburg.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Garner reviewed the rules and procedures pertaining to Zoning Relief applications. He noted that although the Zoning Board is appointed by Council, it is a separate decision making Board. As the applications are usually vague, his opinion is to allow the Zoning Hearing Board to hear all the facts and make a determination according to Borough ordinances.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Henrick reviewed recent events, including those listed in the May Infrastructure Report. She noted that the Mother's Day Tea on the Colebrookdale Railroad was a successful event. Mayor Henrick announced the resignation of Mayor Jenna of Royersford and the opening of Operation 143 behind the Rivet's location. She also reviewed the upcoming June events and the GoFourth festivities scheduled for July 4th, including the Fireworks at 9:30 p.m.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller updated Council on the paving scheduling to begin with H & K contractors to begin June 12th on the west side of the Borough. PennDOT will be paving and milling on Armand Hammer Boulevard in the near future. He also advised that the Commissioners approved a reimbursement agreement for the Keim Street Bridge Replacement project and expected to be

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advertised for construction later this year. He also reported that the LED light conversion is ongoing for the next few weeks and is looking for reduced rates and a rebate of \$95,000 as a PECO incentive. Manager Keller commended Parks & Recreation Director Michael Lenhart for his efforts in obtaining a \$485,000 grant for the Pollock Park upgrades and being instrumental in the cleanup and revitalization of this project with minimal cost to the Borough.

HILL SCHOOL CHAPEL – WAIVER REQUEST FOR RENOVATIONS

Solicitor Garner reminded Council that a waiver was granted several months ago for a small building project. The Hill School is now requesting four minor waivers from SALDO and recommended Council's approval.

POTTSTOWN CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY CENTER – USE OF LOT #1 (READING LOT)

Manager Keller explained the request of the Pottstown Children's Discovery Center to use Lot 1, the Reading Lot for its June 10th event. Mr. Keller noted that this is a somewhat unusual situation as the event was planned for the College's parking lot, but it is now under repair, adding that the Borough does not usually allow private events on Borough property.

Solicitor Garner suggested that this be listed for Monday's agenda to ratify the Manager's recommendation.

BASF, 860 CROSS STREET LEASE

Solicitor Garner advised that this project has been ongoing for over three years. He noted that the contaminated property is owned by BASF and working with DEP to secure approvals for the water and soil issues under Act II. He added that the Borough is attempting to expand its park system on this property at no cost to the Borough, as improvements will be covered by the owner, BASF and will eventually be purchased by the Borough for \$1.00. He added that this allows for additional grant dollars from DCNR.

PRO-CHAMPS (COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS)

Mr. Keller requested that Council authorize the Solicitor to move forward with drafting an addendum to the existing lease agreement with Pro-Champs, which expires July 13, 2023 to address the vacant property inventory system.

BID AWARD – MANHOLE FRAME & LID REHABILITATION

Mr. Keller noted that Staff will have a recommendation for Monday evening.

President Weand noted that these items will be addressed on the regular agenda.

JUNETEENTH COMMUNITY DAY – JUNE 17, 2023 (rain date June 18)

AMBUCS SOAP BOX DERBY – JUNE 16 & 17, 2023 (rain date June 18)

NEW STREET BLOCK PARTY – JULY 4, 2023 (rain date July 8)

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Mr. Keller reviewed the requests for street closures for upcoming events and recommended these be listed for approval on the regular agenda.

ZONING RELIEF REQUESTS

Solicitor Garner reviewed the following Zoning Relief requests as follows:

- a. Zoning – Anthony Tad Doyle & Duece Duece High LLC, 22 East High Street – additional warehouse storage
- b. Zoning – Pastor Justin Valentine & Tri-County Business Campus LLC, 80 Robinson Street- for use of church and day-care services
- c. Zoning – Moncef Bensaad & Covenant Realty, Inc. – 101 East High Street – for use as convenience store
- d. Zoning – Robinson Street LLC, Ron Horosky, 61 Robinson Street – for installation of fence and cable storage

UPCOMING BOARD VACANCIES

President Weand advised that one vacant position exists on HARB to expire April 1, 2026, with four applicants, Tracy Purdy, Wayne Fenstermacher, Viviana Miguel and Miles Feather. There is also an upcoming 6-year term on the Civil Service Commission, which will be addressed in July.

Councilor Monastra suggested that if qualified candidates are underrepresented on these boards, that Council should consider giving them special consideration.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

a. Philip Thees, 63 South Evans Street – complained about several hooded and masked individuals being seen looking into vehicles in the neighborhood. In a more recent incident, individuals with faces concealed, resulted in a shooting incident. He suggested having an ordinance against prowling. He also commented on disturbing incidences at Oak and West Streets.

b. Deb Spence, 153 South Roland Street – requested the outcome from the last meeting regarding the owner of the property at High and Roland Streets, wherein he was made promises in order to get the \$200,000 tax relief by the Borough and the School District, which she voted against. Ms. Spence noted that the owner claimed that this was a promise of him being able to rent his building on Washington Street to whomever he wanted. He supposedly rented it to a pallet company that wanted outdoor storage. She added that the owner stated this was based on promises to not sue the Borough and commented that if this is true, that this is a crime and would like a statement from Council with evidence if true or not true. Ms. Spence also requested information from the Human Relations Committee and has not received a response in three months.

Councilor Vanni responded that last month, when that situation about the building and taxes was discussed and what the gentleman said at that time, she stated that this was not true and her comments can be found in previous minutes.

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COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Procsal praised all involved with the car shows and parade.

Councilor Vanni reiterated her concerns regarding flags on properties. If one business is made to take them down, then all should take them down. She also requested that no rocks be put in the drains in the Spray Park. She also thanked Councilor Lindsay for hosting the trip to Harrisburg on this date, although disappointing with only 19 people attending.

Councilor Lindsay praised the GoFourth kick off event.

Councilor Monastra reviewed the protocol to contact Councilors, who in turn will contact the appropriate department to address constituent concerns. If concerns and quality of life issues are not promptly resolved, he will address in another manner.

EXECUTIVE SESION

President Weand recessed the meeting to executive session at 9:25 p.m. regarding a litigation matter involving St. Paul's Church and Beacon of Hope.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 9:45p.m.