

June 8, 2022

## 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 8, 2022 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with President Weand in the Chair.

## INVOCATION

Reverend Dr. Vernon Ross, Pastor of Bethel AME Church, provided an invocation and urged all to remember the victims of the recent house explosion.

President Wean added that meetings are ongoing with officials to determine the cause of the explosion.

## ATTENDANCE

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

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – Councilor Lebedynsky advised that the report was in the packets.
- b. Transportation – There was no meeting.
- c. Efficient Methods Committee – The next meeting is June 13<sup>th</sup>.
- d. Ordinance Review Committee – The next meeting is in July.
- e. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Ms. Lee-Clark announced the development of Aberdine, a pharmaceutical manufacturing plant to be located on Quinter Street. She also explained that PAED's purpose is through development and relationships with the Borough. As an example, PAED coordinated the recent visit to the America Keg Plant with elected officials. Ms. Lee-Clark reviewed the EPA grant dollars associated with the redevelopment of 215 South Washington Street and PAED's letter of support for the project.

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## BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Land Bank – Ms. Lee Clark advised that the 1000 Cherry Street and 707 Hamilton Street properties are under review. She added that Councilor Vanni, as a Board member, signed a letter to be sent to property owners on the Blighted Property list.

b. Emergency Services Report – Chief Hand advised that the ongoing investigation into the recent explosion and tragedy will be a long process with several agencies involved.

c. Human Relations Commission – Ms. Levengood advised that June is Pride month and June 19<sup>th</sup> is the Juneteenth Federal holiday to honor the end of slavery.

d. Library – There was no report.

e. Ricketts Community Center – Councilor Kirkland referred to the report distributed and advised that summer programs continue.

f. Pottstown School District – Councilor Lindsay reported that councilors have been hired for the Lincoln School and the Pottstown Middle School to deal with the recent tragedy and loss of children in the schools. She added that the School District is determining addresses for children attending Pottstown schools but may not live in the Borough.

## Mayor's Report

Mayor Henrick recounted the events of the May 25<sup>th</sup> house explosion. She urged all to remember the victims and commended the first responders, police and fire fighters for their efforts during this crisis. Mayor Henrick also thanked the School District officials for their ongoing assistance.

## MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller added to the Mayor's report, stating that TCN is overseeing any donations to the victims of the explosion. He added that the Borough's engineers are inspecting the properties for structural damage and the homeowners are urged to contact their own insurance companies. He also reviewed the Panera Bread and Amtrack projects and the ongoing street projects.

Mr. Keller explained the request of John Besler to commemoratively rename Field #3 as Ronald Rhoads, who recently passed away. Mr. Rhoads had a career as a soft-ball player and involved in soft-ball leagues. Mr. Besler has offered a donation of \$1,000 for this proposal. Mr. Keller requested that any concerns be forwarded to him and requested future Council approval.

## PRESENTATION – WILLIAM AND DOROTHY YECK FAMILY FOUNDATION

Patricia McClosky, Regional Parks Planner and Cathy Paretti, President of the Veterans Island project, were present to explain the proposal for public art projects from the William and Dorothy Yeck Foundation. A donation of \$20,000 was provided to the public arts projects in the Borough.

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Michael Lenhart explained that there may be additional approval requirements, such as approval of PennDOT and will require a Borough designee to the committee.

President Weand noted that this matter will be listed for approval on Monday's agenda.

#### PRESENTATION – ELKS #814 VETERANS' BANNERS

Richard Hurter and Gina Custer were present to request Veteran Banners to be placed on High Street. Ms. Custer advised that the banners would be for veterans of all armed forces and active service members.

Mr. Hurter added that this would be a homecoming for Vietnam Veterans who never received a homecoming. He also noted that Pottstown is one of the last surrounding communities to have this program. He provided a sample banner and advised that the banners last approximately 4 years and the committee will be responsible for replacing the flags and maintaining the program.

Mr. Keller reminded all that there is a limited number of brackets and patriotic flags are hung over the summer months and snowflakes are hung over the winter months.

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

#### CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. Keller explained that the Police Department is requesting to authorize the Civil Service Commission to begin the testing process for Corporal and Sergeant due to upcoming retirements and vacancies.

#### 215 SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET

Solicitor Garner reviewed the discussions of last month regarding 215 South Washington Street. Council voted to forgive taxes subject to the conditions of providing a business plan, release for a claim regarding 1200 East High Street and restrictive covenants for use of the property to be recorded against the property. Mr. Garner also recommended that the time of the restrictions be changed, i.e. from 2 years to 5 years and from 5 years to 10 years and the owner has agreed to the timing restrictions.

#### HESS LOT – REVIEW RFP

#### 327 INDUSTRIAL HIGHWAY AND 175 SOUTH EVANS STREET – RFP

Mr. Keller explained the two projects to be revisited by PAED after being vacant for approximately 15 years. He recommended authorizing the Solicitor to draft the RFP and Cooperative Agreements for both projects.

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

#### RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT, CHESTER SMITH, 29 WEST 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET

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Solicitor Garner explained the request of Chester Smith to construct a retaining wall on his property at 29 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, encroaching a portion of the Borough right-of-way. Mr. Smith has signed the Hold Harmless Agreement.

#### PROPERTY DISPOSITON, 1000 CHERRY STREET & CENTER AVENUE

Solicitor Garner reviewed the matter of the property at 1000 Cherry Street, an open space property.

Councilor Paules noted that this is his ward and suggested that the Borough retain the property for the present time, as this is a residential area. It is also in the area of the Dana Plant and parking is minimal.

This will be listed for Monday's agenda.

#### ORDAIN & VACATE PORTION MANATAWNY STREET

Solicitor Garner advised that the Montgomery County Community College's North Hall project is under review with the Planning Commission. The College has submitted a petition to ordain and vacate a portion of Manatawny Street at the intersection of High Street. According to Borough records, this portion is still listed as a street. He added that if Council grants the request, it will come before Council at the August meeting.

#### MERVINE STREET PAVING/UPPER POTTS GROVE TOWNSHIP

Mr. Keller requested the expenditure of \$135,5000 for the paving of Mervine Street according to the cooperative agreement with Upper Pottsgrove Township. The bid was awarded to H & K contractors.

#### 707 HAMILTON STREET

Mr. Keller announced that no bids were received, but a new legislation allows, that after two unsuccessful advertisements with no bids received, the municipality can negotiate directly with a contractor and subject to the grant approval for the property.

#### VICTORY CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRIENDS & FAMILY DAY

President Weand requested a motion on this request as the event is scheduled prior to the next Council meeting.

Councilor Paules motioned, seconded by Councilor Vanni, to grant the request of the Victory Christian Life Center to hold its Friends & Family Day, on June 12, 2022 and closing Washington Street between King Street and Buttonwood Alley from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. subject to review and approval of the Police and Fire Departments. Motion carried: 7 ayes.

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POTTSTOWN AMBUCS SOAP BOX DERBY, WILSON STREET, JUNE 17 & 18, 2022

PARKS & RECREATION – COMEDY SHOWS – BYOB’S IN MEMORIAL PARK, JUNE 17 & JUNE 24, 2022

BLOCK PARTY, SHONDA WILEY, 600 BLOCK KING STREET, JULY 9, 2022

COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT, 400 BLOCK CHESTNUT STREET, JULY 14, 2022

VICTORY CHRISTIAN LIFE, NATIONAL NIGHT OUT, WASHINGTON STREET AUGUST 2, 2022

BLOCK PARTY SPRUCE STREET, TRENITA LINDSAY, AUGUST 6, 2022

Mr. Keller explained the various requests for street closure events and alcohol in Borough Parks.

President Weand noted that these will be listed for approval on the regular agenda.

LABOR DAY CAR SHOW – SMITH FAMILY PLAZA, SEPTEMBER 4, 2022

Mr. Keller advised that the show is approved for High Street and under discussion for the use of Smith Family Plaza.

Mr. Orr was present virtually and advised that he is withdrawing his request to put vehicles in the Park due to concerns regarding the pavers in the park.

ZONING – 415 LAUREL STREET – THEODORE RADZINSKI

Solicitor Garner explained the zoning variance request for the property located at 415 Laurel Street. He noted that a variance was granted in September 2000 to allow a wood working shop and the applicant is now requesting to convert to a metal working shop. The zoning hearing is scheduled for June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Councilor Paules expressed a concern regarding hazmat issues with a metal welding facility.

President Weand advised that this would be listed for possible action on Monday’s agenda.

ZONING – 316 NORTH CHARLOTTE STREET, T. BURLEIGH PROPERTIES LLC

Solicitor Garner explained the variance relief request for the property located at 316 North Charlotte Street to convert a single family home into two apartments, noting there is no parking in that area and four off-street spaces would be required.

President Weand commented that this is in his ward and is requesting a letter of opposition be listed for approval on Monday evening.

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### BOARD VACANCY

President Weand advised that one vacancy exists on the Land Bank Board and Twila Fisher has requested to be reappointed.

### HARB

Mr. Keller reviewed the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 758 East High Street to replace existing sign.

### HARB – ADMINISTRATIVELY APPROVED

Mr. Keller also explained the applications administratively approved as follows:

- a. 1008 High Street – to replace existing roof
- b. 175 North Hanover Street – to replace existing roof

These will be listed on the regular agenda.

### COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

None .

### COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Lindsay reiterated the Mayor's comments and thanking all the first responders associated with the recent tragedy, including the food contributions and the 2022 graduates who volunteered their services. She also commended the Parks & Recreation Department for completing renovations at the Spruce Street Park.

Mr. Lenhart was present and explained the proposed playground project with the Borough and Montgomery County for the area of the Bright Hope Community.

Chief Markovich also explained the testing and hiring process for new police officers and the need for additional officers. He urged interested individuals to refer to the website for the application.

Councilor Paules advised that Council should reconsider the property at Cherry Street, which may bring additional dollars to the Borough if developed and restrict what may be allowed. He also questioned the status of billboards in the Borough and the process of allowing banners throughout the Borough.

Mr. Keller noted that after several discussions, it was found that the billboard advertising would be extremely expensive and not cost effective.

Mr. Keller also explained that the banners have historically been a staffing decision as there has never been a conflict.

Councilor Kirkland urged all to respect the privacy of the victims and families of the recent house explosion and commended all in continuing to bring the Town together.

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Councilor Procsal (virtually) reminded all of the Ward 1 Community meeting with the Police Department, scheduled on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 p.m. in Borough Hall.

Mayor Henrick urged Council to consider naming the community park in the vicinity of the explosion in memory of the families.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.