

July 5, 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 July 5, 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 (virtual), Donald Lebedynsky, Dan Weand and Andrew Monastra, Also present were Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Borough Manager Justin Keller Solicitor Charles Garner (virtual) and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilors Lindsay and Kirkland were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT

President Weand, on behalf of Council, acknowledged Amy Francis and Amy Wolf, present at the meeting, for the successful GoFourth Independence Day events and also the Pottstown Rotary for the wonderful parade.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – The report was in the packet.
- b. Transportation – There was no meeting.
- c. Efficient Methods Committee – There was no report.
- d. Ordinance Review Committee – Councilor Procsal noted there was no meeting.
- e. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Ms. Lee-Clark advised that the Cleaning Program has begun on the streets and sidewalks and address trash issues. She added that some businesses in the 400 block assisted with the clean-up. Ms. Lee-Clark also advised that individual tickets for the Fete are sold out with sponsorship opportunities still available. She also reported that Pottstown Small Minority Businesses have received \$189,000 from the ARPA grant money. She also noted that 15 commercial properties are available in the downtown area.

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BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Land Bank – Ms. Lee-Clark noted that the Board is actively working on multiple properties as offered through the County Judicial sales. She recognized Deb Penrod, Chair of the Land Bank, present at the meeting.
- b. Emergency Services Report - The reports are in the packet.
- c. Human Relations Commission – Ms. Levengood advised that this is the 247th year celebrating Independence Day from Great Britain’s rule. July is National Ice Cream month with July 16th as National Ice Cream Day. The next meeting is July 11th, 6:00 p.m.
- d. Library – Ms. Lipsky reviewed the summer reading programs for children and adults, along with magician and Birds of Prey events. She also reviewed the upcoming bingo and Medicare events and reported on the proposed expansion project at the Library.
- e. Ricketts Community Center – There was no report.
- f. Pottstown School District – There was no report.

SOLICITOR’S REPORT

Solicitor Garner explained the Subdivision and Land Development process for the Borough. SALDO oversees the development, construction, parking, utilities, landscaping, trees and open space requirements. The Borough Engineer reviews the plans in order to confirm compliance with the Borough ordinances. He added that the plan may be considered Major or Minor Land Development plans, along with a waiver of Land Development, used only with no land development issues on a small project.

MAYOR’S REPORT

Mayor Henrick thanked the GoFourth Committee and all volunteers involved in the successful July 4th events. She also advised that she participated in the Juneteenth events, the YWCA Tribute to Women, a seminar for Elder Fraud. She also reported that Dick Franz will again be President of the Pottstown Rotary. Mayor Henrick also noted that her office received Active Shooter Training.

Mayor Henrick addressed an issue with a homeless Veteran. She thanked the Police Department and other emergency contacts for assisting this Veteran in finding a home through the VA. She noted that the Police Department cannot arrest a homeless person if not committing a crime and to round up the homeless in a paddy-wagon and take them to other counties is not a solution and will not happen. She added that she refuses to order the Police Department to arrest someone not committing a crime or not a danger to himself or others. The Mayor added that people have come to Council with a proposed solution for the homeless and Council has turned them down. She also thanked and commended all of Borough Staff as caring individuals.

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MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller provided an update on the Homeless Task Force and working on an endorsement phase with 3 basic criteria, being low barriers, low financial costs and high impact/chance of success. The Task Force has sought shelters in areas of Norristown and Pottstown. Mr. Keller also referred to the updated Grant List for 2022-2023, with successful outcomes. He added that paving is now complete. Next year the Authority will be doing a main replacement project that will include roadway paving. He also reported that the Colebrookdale trail connection to Memorial Park has been completed. Mr. Keller noted that the home page of the website now includes navigation quick links for residents.

2022 FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT

Mr. Keller noted that the Audit is complete with no findings this year and recommended that it be listed for Council approval at the regular meeting.

VACANT PRPOERTY REGISTRATION PROGRAM

Solicitor Garner advised that the ProChamps Company, used for the registration of vacant properties, has filed for bankruptcy. Staff has located another firm and requested authorization to work with a new firm and prepare an agreement with another company.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY 2022 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Mr. Keller explained the request of Montgomery County's 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan and recommended adopting the resolution as presented.

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH FIRE DEPARTMENT – ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Mr. Keller noted that the proposed ordinance amendment is to confirm that the Goodwill, North End and Phillies Fire Companies are available companies for the Borough's fire protection as well as able to receive Firefighter Relief funds received annually from the State.

President Weand advised that this will be listed for approval on the regular agenda.

PSEP LLC – LANKFORD ACQUISTION , 405 KEYSTONE BLVD. WAIVER OF LAND DEVELOPMENT

Solicitor Garner explained the request of the Lankford properties to expand the former 84 Lumber Company property located at 405 Keystone Blvd. The proposal is to repurpose 15,000 square feet and add additions of 18,000 square feet. He noted that the Borough Engineer is not in favor of a Land Development Waiver but rather a Minor Land Development submission. Solicitor Garner requested that this be listed for granting or denying the Waiver of Land Development.

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HILL SCHOOL TENNIS PAVILION

Solicitor Garner also explained the request of The Hill School to allow the Land Development Plan to be completed in phases from a construction stand point and to initially renovate the tennis courts. He requested this be listed on Monday's agenda for consideration.

EDGEWOOD PLAYGROUND 218 MINTZER STREET – WAIVER OF LAND DEVELOPMENT

Solicitor Garner also explained the request of the Pottstown School District for a Waiver of Land Development for the proposed playground at 218 Mintzer Street.

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

BLOCK PARTIES/STREET CLOSURES

Manager Keller reviewed the following requests for road closures:

- a. August 1, 2023 – Victory Christian Life – National Night Out, North Washington Street
- b. August 19, 2023 – Luke Johnson – Block Party, Belmont Street
- c. September 17, 2023 – Reading Gravity Race, Wilson Street

These requests will be listed on Monday's agenda.

UPCOMING BOARD VACANCIES

President Weand advised that a 6-year term on the Civil Service Commission will be considered on Monday's agenda.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

a. Jamie Sanchez, 200 Maplewood Drive – commented on the lack of communication and urged more crime awareness. She added that Council members are not approachable to some constituents. Ms. Sanchez also expressed a concern regarding the trash in the 400 block of High Street, noting that cleanup was necessary prior to the July 4th parade, adding that the business owners should be held accountable. She also noted numerous errors on the Borough's Facebook page and questioned if the Leadership class will be offered this year. She also noted that the flags near the Quoite Club are not yet fixed.

b. Beth Desch, 248 Walnut Street – spoke as the Executive Director for the Pottstown Area Children's Recreation Center and thanked the Borough Manager and Council for allowing the use of the Reading Lot for its recent event. Ms. Desch added that a feature exhibit to include the Golden Gate Bridge construction is expected to open in 2024.

c. Wayne Fenstermacher, 1023 East High Street – questioned the PECO tree removal and replanting and requested a contact for a dead tree. He also questioned the removal of the smaller telephone polls that have since been replaced. Mr. Fenstermacher also asked why Councilors do not respond to citizens' concerns when presented in a public meeting.

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d. Tamara Charles, 439 Walnut Street – spoke as a member of the Pottstown Community Action and announced the upcoming *Love Your Block* program. Mini grants will be offered in the amount of \$250 - \$1,500 for Pottstown residents doing improvement projects in their blocks. The deadline for submission is July 31st. She added that the grants are funded by the Health & Wellness Foundation and the Cities of Service programs.

e. Bruce Madara, 543 North Adams Street - commended Kyle Muth, Public Works, for his ongoing assistance. He also thanked the Mayor for her remarks. Mr. Madara was grateful for South Evans Street being addressed but expressed a concern for not getting a response from the 7th Ward Councilor.

f. Deb Penrod, 215 Amanda Smith – spoke as co-chair for the Pottstown Rotary and thanked all involved for the successful parade and all the participants of the July 4th events. She urged all to watch the PCTV program covering the parade and praised the Amy's for revitalizing the July 4th events.

g. Kyle Weaver, 556 King Street – reiterated his concerns regarding the trash throughout the Borough and the lack of trash receptacles. He enumerated the number of cans on various streets.

h. Darlene Bainbridge, 548 Farmington Avenue – commended all involved with the Parade and Fireworks. She expressed a concern regarding the trash that needed to be cleaned up on July 3rd and July 4th and requested additional organizations and volunteers to assist.

i. Deborah Spence, 153 South Roland Street – requested greater transparency from Pottstown government. She noted that she has no business with the Borough or any Council person and requested all to refrain from backroom deals. She also questioned matters on the restrictive deeds on properties and preferred they not be removed. Ms. Spence commented on the bike lanes and requested bike racks as well. She also questioned why the Land Bank is removing restrictive deeds and who is considered a nice person. She also asked that potholes be addressed on her street and advised that she presented a solution for the homelessness but it has not been addressed.

COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Procsal thanked all involved with the Independence Day events.

Councilor Monastra thanked all the residents that came before Council and addressed quality of life issues. He noted that constituents are urged to contact their Councilors and in turn are instructed to reach out to the appropriate departments. He will then be seeking solutions to the problems. Mr. Monastra expressed a concern regarding a bus shelter being occupied by a homeless veteran. He also commented on being told he does not have authority to speak directly to police officers. He also remarked on how the Police Department handled a dog complaint and a response to someone trapping a groundhog at the Edgewood Cemetery.

Councilor Vanni commented that she is not a politician and does not want to be categorized, adding that she has a good relationship with her constituents. She added that the trash on July 4th was addressed promptly and thanked all involved with the holiday events. Councilor Vanni urged that positive things be addressed and not all the negative items in a public meeting.

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Mayor Henrick also thanked all involved with the Independence Day events and agreed that additional trash cans would be helpful throughout town.

President Weand also commended all involved with the events on July 4th.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.