

July 10, 2023

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ANNOUNCEMENT

Borough Manager Keller explained the format for this evening's meeting, advising that the meeting is a GoTo Virtual Meeting and an in-person meeting. All persons wishing to speak during Public Comment, whether participating by GoToMeeting or telephone, must submit their name and address through chat or email at administration@pottstown.org. Requests to speak will be accepted until 7:05p.m., at which time chat will be closed, and no further requests for comment will be honored. As always, Public Comment will be limited to three minutes per person.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Pottstown Borough Council was called to order on Monday, July 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. as a hybrid, in-person and Go-To Meeting, with President Weand in the Chair.

INVOCATION

President Weand requested a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Lebedynsky, seconded by Councilor Vanni to approve the minutes of the June 12, 2023 Council meeting as presented. Motion carried: 7 ayes.

SUBCOMITTEE REPORTS

a. Finance & Administration – President Weand reported that at 41% of the year, the General Fund revenues are at 69% and expenses at 34%. He added that Real Estate taxes collected are at 89% and local taxes at 54%. The Borough Audit is complete and listed on this agenda. President Weand added that the 2023 Assessment is down \$1,157,460 and the total year-to-date assessment change is \$18,778,840. There were no new LERTA applications.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. EAC – Mr. Derr reported that the last meeting was virtual and will continue in the future. He added that the EAC had suggested replacement for led lighting and was informed that the Borough has already undertaken this project and the majority of lights already replaced. Mr. Derr

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advised that the committee will continue to address certain quality of life issues. He also noted that he has not received any recent information from the Montgomery County Climate Action Coalition. He confirmed that he would like to be reappointed to the EAC and there will be an additional vacancy in August.

Mr. Keller added that over 500 street lights have been upgraded to LED's. Funding is available for the next 1,500 lights and the savings for energy will be seen in the first quarterly bill, with expected savings of \$90,000, which will be put back into the lighting fund for the High Street area.

b. Regional Planning – Councilor Procsal advised that storage space facilities were discussed, with one in Lower Pottsgrove Township and one proposed for the Borough.

c. Blighted Property Review Committee – Jamie Sanchez reported that the committee did a tour of several properties, which may be addressed with the Land Bank. She also requested that the Borough consider seeking grant money for blighted properties, if possible. Ms. Sanchez noted that Winnie Branton may be of assistance to the committee in the near future.

Councilor Procsal advised that within the last two years, more houses have been taken off the blight list.

Mr. Keller noted that the entity must control the property in order to obtain grant money.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

a. Deb Spence, 153 South Roland Street – complained that she did not receive a full 3 minutes last week and will be using her own timer. She is requesting information and the process for the Assistant Manager position and when will the community or Council be presented with the applicants. She added that the environmental committee should have someone from Council on the committee.

b. Dorothy Freeman, 445 Chestnut Street – provided pictures of the overgrown properties and trash accumulation in her area causing an infestation of rats and mice.

c. Jamie Sanchez, 200 Maplewood Drive – questioned the free-standing phone tables and the use of electricity at the clock tower. She is also seeking updates on the Beacon of Hope and the status of the building on High Street. She also advised that Daniel was back in town and was offered assistance but refused it.

d. Jay Lankford, 405 Keystone Blvd. – explained the request of the PSEP for a waiver of the Land Development process. He advised that Lankford's have 4 properties, one in West Pottsgrove. He noted that personal responsibility will be offered if the waiver is granted, as time is at stake to proceed with the project which is expected to bring 80 jobs for one plant, plus 100 for another building.

e. Peggy Lee-Clark, 152 East High Street – spoke in support of Lankford's properties and

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PSEP. PAED has been supportive of this project for 3 ½ years within the planning stages. The construction jobs will assist with an economic driver not seen in years for the Borough. This also abuts the dead end of Keystone Boulevard and will allow for the extension of Keystone Boulevard.

f. Barry Beasley, 338 Jefferson Avenue – commented that the trash and litter impacts his quality of life. He also noted that the Assistant Borough Manager position is advertised for approximately \$115,000 and questioned if any of that money would be allocated for quality of life issues. He also noted that the Infrastructure subcommittee reports are not on the website.

g. Philip Thees, 63 South Evans Street – complained about the loud rockets being launched in the 300 block of New Street during a block party on July 4th. He suggested that all applications list the property owner and tenant and have landlords sign as well. Clean up should be required before and after the events.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

a. Financial Statements - Motion by Councilor Lebedynsky, seconded by Councilor Monastra to accept the Borough of Pottstown Financial Statements for year ended December 31, 2022 as presented by Maillie Accountants. Motion carried: 7 ayes.

b. Vacant Property Registration - Motion by Councilor Procsal, seconded by Councilor Vanni to authorize the Solicitor to prepare an Agreement with HERA Property Registry Solutions, LLC, to continue with the Vacant Property Registration Program, in a form acceptable to the Solicitor, Borough Manager and Licensing & Inspections Director. Motion carried: 7 ayes.

c. Fire Department Ordinance - Motion by Councilor Monastra, seconded by Councilor Lebedynsky to adopt an Ordinance to revise the members of the Pottstown Borough Fire Department.

ORDINANCE NO. 2227

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BURGESS AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF POTTSTOWN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA AMENDING PART 2, APPOINTED OFFICIALS AND PART 11, FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION OF CHAPTER 1, ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNMENT, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF POTTSTOWN, AS AMENDED, TO REVISE THE MEMBERS OF THE POTTSTOWN BOROUGH FIRE DEPARTMENT

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

d. Hazard Mitigation Plan – Motion by Councilor Lebedynsky, seconded by Councilor Vanni to adopt a Resolution adopting the Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan as the Official Plan for the Borough of Pottstown.

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RESOLUTION NO. 2023-13

Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan Municipal Adoption Resolution

WHEREAS, the Borough of Pottstown, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania is most vulnerable to natural and human-made hazards which may result in loss of life and property, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety, and

WHEREAS, Section 322 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) requires state and local governments to develop and submit for approval to the President a mitigation plan that outlines processes for identifying their respective natural hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities, and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Pottstown acknowledges the requirements of Section 322 of DMA 2000 to have an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan as a prerequisite to receiving post disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan has been developed by the Montgomery County Planning Commission and in cooperation with other county departments, and officials and citizens of the Borough of Pottstown; and

WHEREAS, a public involvement process consistent with the requirements of DMA 2000 was conducted to develop the Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan recommends mitigation activities that will reduce losses to life and property affected by both natural and human-made hazards that face the County and its municipal governments,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the governing body for the Borough of Pottstown:

- The Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan is hereby adopted as the official Hazard Mitigation Plan of the Borough of Pottstown; and
- The respective officials and agencies identified in the implementation strategy of the Montgomery County 2022 Hazard Mitigation Plan are hereby directed to implement the recommended activities assigned to them.

ADOPTED, this 10th day of July 2023.

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

e. Lankford Waiver of Land Development – Motion by Councilor Monastra, seconded by Councilor Procsal to grant the request of Mark Lankford of PSEP LLC, Lankford Acquisition Company, for a Waiver of Land Development Plan for the property located at 405 Keystone Boulevard.

Councilor Vanni commented that she was not provided sufficient information and the applicant should have appeared at the Committee of the Whole meeting to explain the request.

Councilor Lindsay also advised that she has not had a chance to review the request and questioned if this could be tabled until next month and questioned the Engineer's position.

Solicitor Garner noted that the Engineer's letter was included in the Committee of the Whole packets, advising of the repurposing or removal of 14,000 square feet and additional building of 18,000 square feet, adding that timing of the plan is significant.

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Mr. Lankford commented that the difference is minor with only 1,300 square feet and already engineered in the plan.

President Weand requested a roll-call vote.

Kirkland	yes	Procsal	yes
Lebedynsky	no	Vanni	no
Lindsay	no	Weand	no
Monastra	yes		

Motion denied: 4 nays, 3 ayes.

f. Edgewood Playground - Motion by Councilor Lebedynsky, seconded by Councilor Vanni to grant the request of the Pottstown School District for a Waiver of the Land Development Plan for the Edgewood Playground for the property located at 218 Mintzer Street

Councilor Vanni commented that this is a waiver as it is minor and it is a playground.

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

g. Hill School Tennis - Motion by Councilor Vanni, seconded by Councilor Lebedynsky to approve the construction phasing plan for The Hill Tennis Facility LD#1-23, subject to review and approval of the Borough Engineer and Borough Solicitor. Motion carried: 7 ayes.

h. National Night Out - Motion by Councilor Procsal, seconded by Councilor Vanni to grant the request of the Victory Christian Life Center to hold a National Night Out Block Party on August 1, 2023, resulting in the closing of North Washington Street between Chestnut Street and Rowan Alley from 4:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m., subject to review and approval of the Police and Fire Departments

Councilor Monastra commented that in light of recent disruptive block parties, this should be reviewed by the Police Department for clean-up and noise.

Councilor Procsal noted that this is an annual event with no previous concerns.

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

i. Block Party Belmont Street - Motion by Councilor Lebedynsky, seconded by Councilor Vanni to grant the request of Luke Johnson to hold a Block Party on August 19, 2023 (rain date (August 20th), resulting in the closing of Belmont Street between Reynolds Avenue and 8th Street from 4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m., subject to review and approval of the Police and Fire Departments.

Councilor Monastra reiterated his comments concerning block parties.

Councilor Vanni advised that she attends this event and the daughter prepares for this event and all are invited.

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

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j. Reading Gravity Race - Motion by Councilor Lebedynsky, seconded by Councilor Vanni to grant the request of the Reading Gravity Racing League to hold its Soapbox Race on September 10, 2023 (rain date September 17th), resulting in the closing of Wilson Street from North State Street to Farmington Avenue, from 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., subject to review and approval of the Police and Fire Departments

Councilor Vanni commented that she heard this is a wonderful event and plans to attend.

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

k. Civil Service Committee - Motion by Councilor Procsal, seconded by Councilor Lebedynsky to reappoint Mark Gibson to the Civil Service Commission for a six-year term, to expire July 22, 2029. Motion carried: 7 ayes.

REPORT OF BILLS – Motion by Councilor Lebedynsky , seconded by Councilor Procsal to pay the outstanding bills in the amount of \$2,615,824.35. Motion carried: 7 ayes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Monastra thanked all that came to the meeting and wished Council could respond to them as he is not sure they ever get a response. He added that it's not okay to allow phone stores to act for the drug industry.

Councilor Lebedynsky announced that Dwan Mader achieved her Green Belt with Six Sigma and looked forward to the Johnson Block Party and the Gravity Race.

Councilor Vanni also thanked constituents that have contacted her over the last four years and suggested that not all conversations or concerns need to be publicized.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

Justin M. Keller
Borough Manager