

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

INVOCATION

ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Lisa Vanni, Donald Lebedynsky, Trenita Lindsay, Dan Weand and Joseph Kirkland. Also present were Borough Manager Justin Keller, Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Assistant Solicitor Matthey Hovey and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilor Paules was absent.

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 – Councilor Lebedynsky reported that the committee is launching a program to report concerns more efficiently on line. It is being tested internally and will launch on October 5th and will initially be limited to trash concerns.
- d. Ordinance Review Committee – Councilor Procsal advised that the next meeting will be in October.
- e. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Ms. Lee-Clark commended all involved with the successful Orchid Car Show held the past weekend. She also reminded all of the September 9th Fete en Blanc event with 750 guest expected.

BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Land Bank – Ms. Lee Clark advised that the Land Bank recently purchased three properties, 421 Hale street, 208 Gable Avenue and 439 Chestnut Street and all have been conveyed and agreements of sale are in process.
- b. Emergency Services Report – Chief Hand reminded all that Fire Prevention week is

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October 9th to October 15th and the Department will be working with the School District as well.

c. Human Relations Commission – Ms. Levengood advised that National Hispanic Heritage month is September 15th to October 15th. She added that the annual Latin Festival is scheduled for September 13th, 2:00 p.m. -6:00 p.m. in Riverfront Park. The next meeting is September 13th.

d. Library – Ms. Lipsky provided information for upcoming events throughout the Library, including the Health and Wellness event on September 17th and the Library Tea on September 24th.

e. Ricketts Community Center – Councilor Kirkland noted the after school program has begun and a report was in the packets.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Henrick outlined the events she recently attended, including the anniversary of the Little Free Library on North Warren Street Library. She also advised that she received a tour of Ron Riekel's Monarch Butterfly farm. Mayor Henrick also met with eight families from the May 26th explosion and urged Staff to contact them with an update on the investigation. She also announced a mental health healing event at the YMCA Complex, scheduled for September 10th, 6:00 p.m., for anyone impacted by the May 26th explosion,

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller advised that an agreement of sale has been reached for the property located at 707 Hamilton Street with Genesis Housing and the Land Bank. He also advised that the arch repair for 42 Walnut Street has begun. He also noted that there will be a budget discussion at the October meeting. Mr. Keller announced that the Zoning Officer has withdrawn the citations regarding the violation notices sent to the Churches, added that he appreciated the courtesies and cooperation from the Churches. Mr. Keller also provided an update on current grants, including the award for the Chestnut and South Street Parks.

PRESENTATION – ATTORNEY ERIC FREY FOR BEACON OF HOPE

Attorney Hovey explained the request of Beacon of Hope to establish a homeless shelter at the property located at 601 and 619 West High Street. The zoning hearing is scheduled for September 28th. The Conditional Use application was extended at the request of the applicant.

Attorney Eric Frey, representing Beacon of Hope, along with Tom Niarhos, Beacon of Hope, Executive Director and Mark Boorse, Vice President of Board of Directors were present and outlined the proposed use of the property located at 601 and 619 West High Street. Attorney Frey asked for Council's support for the zoning application letter sent this month. If allowed, Beacon of Hope would then withdraw the Conditional Use application. The homeless shelter would consist of 45 guests in the over 1200 square feet facility. There will be meeting rooms and dining area for the rooming house. He noted that Council has a legal obligation to provide shelter for these individuals. Attorney Frey explained that this is a non-profit organization and is asking to address the homeless situation in the Borough.

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Mr. Niarhos added that over the past 2 ½ years, it has been found that only 25% of people offered to go elsewhere for shelter have accepted the offer. Others have maintained that this is their home and will not go elsewhere. Beacon's goal is to keep people in their own community.

President Weand reminded all that Pottstown is part of the Pottstown Regional Planning Committee and other communities comply with the requirement to have a homeless shelter, therefore it is not necessary for the Borough of Pottstown alone to establish a homeless shelter.

Mr. Niarhos also explained the difficulty in transferring an individual from one County to another, including assistance, housing and health services. Residency is obtained from some type of documentation, including a medical documentation, a social security identification or a most recent identified document, dated 3-months prior. Mr. Niarhos added that Beacon received \$1.3 million from the County and have other anonymous donors. He also outlined the services provided by the case manager on an individual basis, along with the security and plans of the building. He also advised that he is following the successful plan of the Reading Salvation Army program.

Mr. Boorse reviewed the services available to the individuals when they are residing at the shelter, including the Housing Locator and support services. He added that the services do not cross County lines. Mr. Boorse also explained the closing of the Norristown facility, as the property was a state owned property and conveyed back to Norristown, with the expiring lease on the property.

Mayor Henrick attested to the lack of homes or shelters, as there are 8 displaced families from the recent explosion with no housing available.

Attorney Frey added that he is seeking Council's support for the special exception for a rooming house and a variance for the homeless shelter.

Attorney Hovey noted that an executive session is scheduled for this evening on this litigation matter and will be listed for action on Monday evening's agenda.

2021 BOROUGH AUDIT

Finance Director Marley Boone reported that no finders were found on the 2021 Borough Audit and the Financial Statements were presented fairly in all aspects.

MMO – 2023 POLICE PENSION PLAN & 2023 NON UNIFORM PENSION PLAN

Ms. Boone reviewed the actuarial calculations for 2023 Minimum Municipal Obligations and requested the resolutions be approved on Monday evening.

APPROVED TREE LIST MODIFICATION

Mr. Keller requested approval to remove ash trees from the approved list of trees for replacement, due to the number of trees effected by the ash boar disease. He noted that this can be done through resolution rather than an ordinance change and is the recommendation of the Ordinance Review committee. This would not impact the existing trees.

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OAK STREET RIGHT OF WAY

Mr. Keller explained the request of a resident to take over a portion of the Oak Street extension, previously a part of the May Street Crossing Development. The extension is no longer needed and recommended conveyance of the property through a Quit Claim Deed.

MCCC NORTH HALL, 144 WEST HIGH STREET

Attorney Hovey reviewed the request of the Montgomery County Community College for the land development plan for the property located at 144 West High Street. He outlined the conditions and the waivers for the proposed open space area and requested Council's approval as recommended by the Planning Commission.

SOLID WASTE BID AWARD

Mr. Keller reviewed the one bid received for the 2023 Solid Waste Collection project from J. P. Mascaro & Sons. He noted that the Borough has the option for 2 one-year extensions from the 2019 proposal by Mascaro's.

Sam Mascaro, Director of Sales, J. P. Mascaro, disputed the Borough's option for the one-year extension, noting this was not the agreed upon motion in 2019. He also explained the benefits of accepting the present proposal for a five-year contract.

STREET PAINTING, CENTER LINES & CROSSWALKS BIDS

Mr. Keller noted that the one-bid received will be reviewed and a recommendation will be listed for Monday evening's meeting.

TOSS YOUR TURKEY – NOVEMBER 24, 2022

PARKS & REC 5K – JANUARY 1, 2023

Mr. Keller reviewed the street closure requests for upcoming events and recommended approval on Monday evening.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

a. Ralph Bainbridge, 226 Diamond Street – discussed the murder of Shawn Robinson several years ago and stated he wanted to meet Shawn's murderer. He also commented on the Cluster of Churches and hopes for additional car and bike shows.

b. Peggy Lee-Clark, 152 East High Street – commented on the Beacon of Hope on behalf of the PAED Board and the business community. She noted that the proposed site is more appropriate than the previously suggested location on North Charlotte Street. Councilor Kirkland requested a copy of PAED's statement.

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COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Vanni thanked the Johnson's for their successful block party and congratulated the College on the Challenge Center.

Councilor Procsal praised the recent car show events and appreciated the cameras throughout town, while walking with his children.

Mayor Henrick announced the health event on September 8th with the NAACP and the County.

President Weand also praised the Challenger Center and the two car shows.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Weand recessed the meeting at 8:35 p.m. for an executive session for a litigation matter, with no action to be taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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