

October 5, 2022

CONDITIONAL USE HEARING – Donald Cloen d/b/a House of Prayer

Solicitor Garner opened a Conditional Use Hearing at the request of Donald Cloen d/b/a House of Prayer. The applicant is requesting to use a portion of the property located at 1304 East High Street as a church. Solicitor Garner entered several documents into evidence as Council exhibits.

Mr. Cloen was sworn in and testified that the use of the church would be for people to gather and pray for Pottstown. He noted that there is off-street parking and expects no more than 20 individuals present at one time. He added that the hours would vary, with several evening hours, and no lectures or sermons, simple a place to pray.

There was no public comment and the hearing closed at 6:50 p.m.

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 October 5, 2022 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, Donald Lebedynsky, Trenita Lindsay, Dan Weand and Joseph Kirkland (virtual). Also present were Borough Manager Justin Keller, Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Solicitor Charles Garner and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilors Paules and Vanni were absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – Councilor Lebedynsky noted that the report was in the packet.
- b. Transportation – There was no meeting.
- c. Efficient Methods Committee – Councilor Lebedynsky reported there was no meeting.

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d. Ordinance Review Committee – Councilor Procsal advised that the committee will meet in October.

e. Economic Development & Business Liaison – Ms. Lee-Clark reminded all of that October is small business month and will be working on the I pick Pottstown gift cards. Individuals may use the yifty.com app. She also noted that beginning October 7th, PAED will be celebrating Manufacturing Week, which be listed on the social media page. She reviewed the opening of new businesses, including the expansion of the Alley to be indoors. Ms. Lee-Clark announced that over 50% of the Fete en Blanc guests were from outside of the Borough.

BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Land Bank – Ms. Lee Clark advised the Land Bank is moving through the settlements of the acquired properties, including 707 Hamilton Street.

b. Emergency Services Report – Chief Hand had no report.

c. Human Relations Commission – Ms. Levengood advised that National Hispanic Heritage month continues through October 15th. She added that October is Italian American and cultural month, National Domestic Violence month, National Disability Employment month, National Bullying month and LGBTQ month. The next meeting is November 8th.

d. Ricketts Community Center – Councilor Kirkland noted the report was in the packets and noted that the after school program continues and membership stands at 733 members.

e. Library – Ms. Lipsky provided information for upcoming events including 72 new cards issued last month from the Borough and 460 new cards for the year. She also advised that the circulation includes 37,000 books and materials and 5,210 participants in programs. Ms. Lipsky also advised that there are no banned books at the Library at the present time.

f. Pottstown School District – Councilor Lindsay reported that the District had a parents and guardians for an evacuation procedure in the event of a crisis. There was also a discussion on service dogs and therapy dogs, with more information to follow. She added that there is the possibility of hiring building subs for the schools.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Henrick reported on the classes and events at which she attended and participated, including an event with the NAACP to assist victims of the recent explosion. She also commended Kourtney High, Grants Assistant, for conducting the Citizens' Leadership Academy classes. Mayor Henrick announced that the Veterans' Island has been official named by resolution during the Veterans' Day event. She also announced that she will be offering her legal services free of charge to victims of the explosion.

Mayor Henrick reviewed the upcoming events throughout the Borough for October. She reminded all of the Halloween Parade scheduled for October 22nd at 4:00 p.m. and Trick or Treat night on October 31st, 5:30 p.m. -8:00 p.m. and reminded all that election day is November 8th.

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MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller reported that Genesis Housing is working on a draft plan for updating the Washington Street neighborhood. He also updated Council on the grants including \$125,000 from DCED for the Chestnut Street and South Street Parks improvements. In addition, \$85,000 was received from DCNR for the South Street Park and \$25,000 from the Yeck Foundation. He also advised that the Pedestrian Bridge in Memorial Park DEP permit has been submitted, which may take 60-90 days for approval and hopefully the project is completed in spring 2023.

Mr. Keller also announced that \$140,000 for the flood mitigation program for 1200 High Street was received. He added that notice was issued to J. P. Mascaro to execute the one-year extension on the present contract, with further discussion to follow.

BUDGET PRESENTATION

Manager Keller and Finance Director Marley Boone presented the 2023 budget highlights. Mr. Keller advised that presently the deficit stands at \$343,000, which would result in a 3.4% tax increase. He explained the contractual obligations of wages and health care costs.

Ms. Boone noted that major capital purchases include 2 police vehicles, server and camera upgrades for the Police Department, one new vehicle for the Licensing & Inspections Department, one new backhoe and one new vehicle for part-time fire inspectors. She also referred to the decline in real estate assessments since 2005. Ms. Boone also noted the tax loss in tax-exempt parcels, totaling over \$2 million. She advised that the 2023 budget includes the addition of two police officers, one part-time parking enforcement officer, two utility maintenance operators and two part-time fire inspectors.

Mr. Keller explained the Capital Saving contributions for major purchase with a \$100,000 contribution budgeted for 2023. This will include an upgrade to the HVAC roof top unit for the Borough Hall building, a boiler replacement and fleet replacement. A parking lot paving project is also budgeted. Mr. Keller also outlined the use of the \$2.3 million in ARPA funds.

Mr. Keller noted the deficit of \$405,000 in the trash fund, which will be covered by the reserve fund. He also advised that the debt service fund stands at \$264,993 for the Borough Garage and will be discussing options with the Finance Committee to lower the debt service. He also reviewed the balance fire fund and the fire service agreement with West Pottsgrove Township. Mr. Keller added Staff is recommending a small increase in taxes each year to avoid a major increase at one time that has occurred in certain past years.

ZONING VARIANCE REQUEST – BRAD HETTINGER, 381 West High Street

Solicitor Garner explained the request of Brad Hettinger to extend hours of operations for his storage and mini-market property located at 381 West High Street. He noted that the applicant is requesting additional hours to keep vehicles on the property while being repaired and requesting an accessory structure for storage.

President Weand noted this would be listed for possible action on Tuesday's agenda in order for Councilor Vanni to provide a recommendation.

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RESOLUTION – DCNR – CHESTNUT STREET PARK
RESOLUTION – PECO GREEN – RIVERFRONT PARK TREE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Keller reviewed the request of the Parks & Recreation Department to submit grant applications for the Chestnut Street Park project and the Tree Management project in Riverfront Park.

ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER 2023 ADDENDUM TO CONTRACT

Solicitor Garner referred to the proposal from the Animal Control Officer for a compensation increase and requested authorization to draft an addendum to the contract.

President Weand noted these items would be listed for the regular agenda.

HOUGH ASSOCIATES – RECYCLING DATA

Mr. Keller referred to the request for a five-year agreement with Hough Associates for the collection of recycling data for the 904 Recycling grant application, with a cost of \$7,500 per year. He noted that Hough Associates netted approximately \$90,000 in state grants last year.

MOSAIC FALL DECORATIONS

Mr. Keller advised that the Mosaic Community Arts Committee and the Haunts on High have requested to decorate the light poles on the 200, 300 & 400 blocks of High Street from October 18th to November 2, 2022.

HALLOWEEN BLOCK PARTY – JANET FREEDLINE, NORTH FRANKLIN STREET
COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY – VICTORY CHRISTIAN LIFE, WASHINGTON STREET

Mr. Keller reviewed the requests for street closures for Halloween Block Parties, scheduled for October 31, 2022.

YWCA – ROAD CLOSURE – OCTOBER 20 – 22, 2022

Mr. Keller reminded all of the maintenance agreement with the YWCA to upgrade its art work on the 300 block of King Street. The YWCA is also asking to close portions of King Street for the maintenance and also a block party on October 22, 2022. He noted the closure should not interfere with the Halloween Parade set for 4:00 p.m. on October 22nd.

These items will be listed for consideration on the regular agenda.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

None.

COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Procsal congratulated the Juan Carlos restaurant on obtaining its liquor license.

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Councilor Lindsay reminded all of the blood drive at the Ricketts Center hosted by the NAACP scheduled for October 13th. She also noted that the Police Department will be hosting “Coffee with the Cops” on October 7th in Smith Family Plaza.

Mayor Henrick thanked former Councilor Sheryl Miller and Cat Naps for attending to 10 cats from one of the displaced families of the explosion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Weand recessed the meeting at 8:10 p.m. for an executive session for a litigation matter and personnel matters, with no action to be taken.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.