

COLLEGEVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 7, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7PM by Council President Cathy Kernen

ROLL CALL: President Cathy Kernen, Pro Tem Gary Hoffmann, Council Member Marion McKinney, Council Member Craig Farr, Council Member Valarie Beckius, Council Member Kathy Costello and Mayor Aidsand Wright-Riggins. VP Shannon Spencer was not present.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Solicitor Dan Grieser, Engineer David Leh, Police Chief Bart Bucher and Borough Manager Tamara Twardowski.

**MOTION** to approve the minutes from the March meeting by Ms. McKinney with a second by Mr. Hoffmann

**MOTION** carries 6-0

Ms. Kernen introduced Chris Canavan to discuss final approval for the Land Development plan known as Freeland Square. Mr. Canavan advised that one final waiver has been requested and recommended for approval by the Planning Commission regarding plantings close to the underground utilities. Barriers will be laid to ensure the roots of the trees will not disrupt the utilities. Mr. Farr asked how this works. Mr. Canavan explained that the burlap barriers merely encourage the roots to grow in a different direction and that this is a common practice. Mr. Grieser advised that public comment be allowed before approval is granted by Council.

Brian Fox 104 W Third Ave: Mr. Fox wanted to be assured that before demolition, the environmental testing is complete.

Mr. Canavan advised that both Phase I and II are complete. He noted that the demolition of a site this large is heavily regulated by the state. He assured everyone that the safety fence is up, the asbestos is being properly taken care of and that the construction vehicles will be directed on to Main Street and not W Third Ave.

**MOTION** to approve the final conditional land development for Freeland Square by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Beckius

**MOTION** carries 6-0

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Aileen Johnson, Director of PV Library reported that the library is now open twenty-eight hours per week and still has curbside pickup for those who want it. She noted that the Norristown Library now has a new Director, Karen D'Angelo. All programs will continue to be online through the summer.

Public Comment closed.

TREASURE'S REPORT: Ms. Twardowski noted that the full report is available at the office and asked for approval of disbursement included payroll, Ach payments, and checks #4793-4857 totaling \$188,874.14. She reported that transfer taxes are up \$40K from last year (mostly due to the WB Homes purchase of the Rees property closing), earned income taxes are up approximately \$20K over last year

and that we are about \$10K over budget on snow removal. Ms. Twardowski also made note of funds of \$500K that may be made available from the government to the Borough under the American Rescue Plan. She explained that there are very specific guidelines for how this money can be used and that, unfortunately, it cannot be used for roads or bridges. She will continue to update council on the ever changing guidelines and will work to best utilize the funds to benefit the borough.

**MOTION** to approve the Treasure's report and checks my Ms. McKinney with a second by Mr. Hoffmann.

**MOTION** carries 6-0

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Ms. Kernen shared a presentation that was a part of the latest BDC meeting. She highlighted the following points:

- Core Development will start creating density at the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave & Main St corner
- Work is needed on the other side of Main St between Fourth & Fifth Avenues
- Begin looking at which college owned properties can be leased to businesses now
- Focus on helping recruit good destination businesses as anchors, such as the Key Bank building
- Consideration of Clamer Hall as a town center
- Flowers on Main St
- The RAP Grant application was completed under the wire. We are considering what the funds can be used for to best benefit the Borough; as in expanding our meeting space and a renovation to Borough Hall should we receive the grant.
- She and Robert Botti wrote articles regarding the future of the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel, taking opposing sides as to whether the building should be saved. Mr. Botti's article said that the building is too far gone and that it would take too much money to fix for anyone to ever see a profit from doing so. Ms. Kernen took the side of saving the building no matter the cost because it dates back eleven generations, and that once the history is destroyed, it cannot be replaced. She noted that she spoke with the owner at length and that he appreciates any help with fundraising. The purpose of the opposing articles was to get feedback from the community. Ms. Kernen is reaching out to the Montgomery County Historical Society for assistance. She is also working on a new historic building ordinance with our solicitor to maintain the quaint look of our Main St.

Mr. Grieser noted that he is making revisions to the ordinance, will take those to the Planning Commission and then back to Council for approval. He also said that he is working on the zoning overlay for both sides of Main St between Fourth & Fifth Avenues to make the zoning the same.

COMMUNICATIONS: Ms. Spencer noted that the newsletter now has 635 subscribers and the April edition will go out this week.

CPVRPC: Ms. Beckius reported that the committee worked on the post cards, brochures and the interactive map for the trail map. She noted that storm water was a big discussion as many municipalities are concerned. The next meeting is scheduled for April 19.

CTMA & PUBLIC WORKS: Ms. McKinney said the CTMA meeting was brief. They paid bills and discussed where to invest funds. She & Mr. Farr agreed that annuities are risky and they are not willing to risk ANY of the public's money. Ms. McKinney wholeheartedly agreed that they need to be responsible stewards

of the funds. Mr. Hoffmann asked if there are restrictions for where funds are to be invested. Mr. Grieser said there are less than some may think and he will provide more information to the committee.

LPVRSA: Ms. Stagliano provided the following April report:

- Approved 15 EDU's capacity Rights Agreements
- Release of 20 EDU's Chapter 94 letters
- Completed Sludge Storage Tank Mixer project
- Middle Perkiomen Creek Interceptor Project progress:
- Final Completion date: May10, 2022 (Originally June 3, 2021) many issues, flooding, Eagles, etc. moved that completion date further out.
- Project Duration: 1088 days
- Project Duration to date: 636 days
- % Complete: 58.5%
- Contract Amount: (Original \$39,481,777.00) \$40,122,832,55
- Work Completed to date: \$18,268,645,55
- Percentage: 45.5%
- Contractor updated schedule, indicated they will work 50% of Saturdays to meet contract completion date. Contractor experienced 11 delay days due to weather in Jan/Feb as result of snow, flooding and winter weather.
- LPVRS Board is reviewing Allan Myers' claims concerning flooding damage in August and November.
- Annual Average daily Flow:
- Actual: 9.3 MGD (Million Gallon Daily)
- Permit: 14.25 MGD
- Final design of emergency power generator in progress.
- Numerous maintenance and repairs to the plant were performed.
- If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

PARKS: Ms. Costello reported that she and her group of volunteers (council members, St Eleanor's CYO teams and residents) have been working to clean up trash, sticks and trees at our three community parks.

PERSONNEL: No report

PLANNING COMMISSION: Ms. Twardowski reported that the last meeting focused on two projects. They recommended approval of the WB Homes project Freeland Square which council granted this evening. The second, was a sketch plan submitted by the owners of the Collegeville Car Wash. They are hoping to expand their business to the vacant property they own next door. There are some zoning issues that need to be dealt with: it's a non-conforming use, the amount of impervious surface and that fact it is located in a flood plain. The Planning Commission had no issue with the "use" of the business and suggested the owner move forward with getting a variance. The PC will meet again in April to discuss ordinances being worked on by the solicitor.

STREETS, ROADS & PUBLIC SAFETY: Mr. Farr said they had a very busy meeting that covered several topics. The first was the sink hole that developed next to McDonald's. Because the sink hole was due to damage from the installment of the water line, Public Works department covered the cost of and handled the repair. However, this repair brought up a discussion of the brick crosswalks on Main Street and how the repairs are very expensive and that going forward, perhaps bricks not be used since they are expensive and less durable. Ms. Kernen noted that when the repaving begins on Main Street,

Penn DOT will not replace roadway with anything decorative and that we should consider just having the brick crosswalks milled and overlaid with asphalt and then paint the crosswalks. The next issue that came up was the No Parking at 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave & Chestnut St. It is now set up that there is no parking on the side of the street across from Freeland Square. WB Homes has requested that this be swapped during construction so there would be no parking on their side for safety reasons. Ms. Twardowski believes this can be done during this time without changing the ordinance as long as it gets switched back post construction. Mr. Farr noted that letters were sent to all residents of Park Avenue as well as all the streets off Park and only 5 responses came in that all were in favor of the speed pillows. He hopes to find a way to reach out to more residents for feedback and to also look into traffic counts and how this project could possibly divert traffic to other streets. He said he is welcoming representatives from Montgomery County Planning for their input to the information he has collected. He reported that the Fire Safety Inspection has begun and will be an effective program. Mr. Farr has asked Ms. Twardowski to research adopting a rental property inspection. He also noted that he is working with Joe Hastings on a survey of all the drains in the borough. He feels this will be a big issue around budget time because there needs to be a maintenance plan going forward. The drains cost approximately \$1500 each. Mr. Farr said they also discussed the best way to get the word out to residents that homeowners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their sidewalks.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

ENGINEER: Mr. Leh reported that bids went out for this year's paving project and that seven bids were received. The lowest bid was from Innovative Construction and was for \$74,392.45 for paving only and \$85,570.45 for paving and speed pillows. The contractor is amenable to the location of the speed pillows being confirmed at a later time.

**MOTION** to approve the paving bid to Innovative Construction with the speed pillow portion to be amended at a future time by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Beckius

**MOTION** carries 6-0

Mr. Leh asked for a **MOTION** to approve the second and final escrow release for Royal Farms in the amount of \$59,015.39 with the condition of legal & engineering fees pad and an eighteen month maintenance bond

**MOTION** to approve the final escrow release to Royal Farms by Ms. McKinney with a second by Mr. Hoffmann

**MOTION** carries 6-0

Mr. Leh noted that they are still working on verbiage with Royal Farm's attorneys for the covenant that will ensure that Royal Farms will maintain the storm drains.

Mr. Leh asked for a **MOTION** to approve the escrow release for the 339-341 Main St parking lot project. The release is for \$21,681.00 and a maintenance bond will be provided.

**MOTION** to approve the escrow release for 339-341 Main St by Mr. Farr with a second by Ms. McKinney

**MOTION** carries 6-0

SOLICITOR: Mr. Grieser asked for permission to draft an update to the property maintenance ordinance to incorporate adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code.

**MOTION** to approve the drafting and advertising of updated property maintenance ordinance by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Beckius.

**MOTION** carries 6-0

MANAGER: Ms. Twardowski reported that the fire inspections are going well and that our inspector has completed most of the Collegeville Shopping Center. She noted that the Montgomery County Borough's Association is resuming their meetings and is hosting their first since last year on April 22 at 7PM via ZOOM for anyone that would like to attend. Ms. Twardowski collected information from our energy provider and got prices for 20% clean, which is the government standard, 50% renewable, 75% and 100%. She said that any of these options will save us money, but that the prices escalate daily. Her

recommendation is to approve the five year rate tonight so that she can sign the agreement tomorrow. Mr. Hoffmann reported that if we opted for the 100% renewable option, the borough would still save \$500 per year and that is his preference.

**MOTION** to approve locking in the 100% renewable energy rate for five years by Ms. McKinney with a second by Mr. Hoffmann

**MOTION** carries 6-0

POLICE: Chief Bucher noted that his report is available at the office and is open to any questions. He advised that the Drug Take Back Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 24 from 10AM to 2PM at Borough Hall. He expressed his appreciation for the work that Ms. Twardowski is doing and also how well the Public Safety Committee is doing under the leadership of Mr. Farr.

Mr. Farr expressed his hope that people will attend and bring their concerns to the Public Safety meeting as they have much more time to delve into issues. Much more so than at the Council Meeting which has so many issues to cover. The Chief also commented that he thinks that Mr. Yardoumian is doing a great job with the fire inspections. This new initiative will make everyone safer.

FIRE CO: No report

TRAPPE AMBULANCE: No report

MAYOR: The Mayor joined with the Chief in expressing his appreciation for how well all the committees and staff are working together to make Collegeville such a great place to live! He thanked the Rotary for their generous gift of the bike Fixit Station and showed some photos of where it will be placed at the trailhead near DaVinci's.

**MOTION** to approve the Committee and Administrative reports by Ms. McKinney with a second by Mr. Hoffmann

**MOTION** carries 6-0

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Brian Fox 104 W 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave: Mr. Fox expressed concern about the amount of baseballs that fly out and hit cars and homes on Third Ave. He asked if there were any plans to extend the back stop. There was discussion about how to address the issue.

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:44PM