

COLLEGEVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ZOOM MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2021

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

ROLL CALL: Council President Cathy Kernen, Council VP Shannon Spencer, Council 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.

Also in attendance: Solicitor Dan Grieser, Engineer Dave Leh, Police Chief Bart Bucher, Borough Manager Tamara Twardowski and Administrative Assistant Suzanne Robertson.

MOTION to approve the Minutes from the February 3, 2021 meeting by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Spencer

MOTION carries 7-0

*It was noted by Ms. Costello that she requested to advertise (not approve) the new park ordinance at the last meeting.

Ms. Kernen asked Mr. Leh to explain the proposed Land Development at 131 W 4th Ave. Mr. Leh noted that we have received a minor Land Development application to convert an existing building located between Chestnut St and Park Ave on 4th into three apartments. They plan to add a sidewalk on 4th Ave and remove impervious surface at the site which will "green up" the space quite a bit. He explained that this is a permitted use under our code and that the project received preliminary approval from the Planning Commission last month. He introduced Joe Clement to give further details. Mr. Clement provided drawings for Council to depict how the new area will look. There were many questions from Council regarding the aesthetic appeal of the project. Mr. Clement explained that the finished product with the new, extensive grassy areas and trees, will be a huge improvement to what is sitting there now.

Mr. Clement explained the waivers they are requesting:

#1 – 600-13E9B regarding existing features within 100ft of site

#2 – 600-38 requiring lights on 4th St

#3 – 600-34A requiring a green strip verge

#4 – 600-53 regarding landscaping

#5 – 600-13.89B regarding the 2ft interval grade change

MOTION to approve the Land Development at 131 W 4th Ave by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Spencer

MOTION carries 6-1 (Hoffmann)

PUBLIC COMMENT: No comments

Mr. Grieser explained that the existing tax collector ordinance sets the compensation rate and that an amendment has been prepared to allow the compensation to be set by Resolution which will make changes easier and less expensive in the future by saving advertising costs.

MOTION to approve Ordinance 605 authorizing tax collector compensation to be determined by resolution was made by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Beckius.

MOTION carries 7-0

MOTION to approve Resolution 2021-08 to appoint Jon Doman as tax collector and setting compensation was made by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Spencer.

MOTION carries 7-0

Mr. Doman was officially sworn in by Mayor Wright-Riggins.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

BUDGET & FINANCE: Ms. Twardowski noted the totals in all of the Borough accounts and requested ratification of payrolls, automatic withdrawals and Check #4742-4792 in the amount of \$177,277.70. She noted that revenues and expenses are in line with last year and that real estate transfer taxes are up.

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

MOTION carries 7-0

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Ms. Kernen reported that the Redner's Shopping Center management company is in early talks with a developer that is considering taking the old Sears Hardware space and converting it to 1st floor retail space with loft apartments above. She reported that Mr. Grieser is working on an update to the Borough sign ordinance in the hopes that we will have a more uniform look to our downtown. Ms. Kernen said the majority of the meeting was focused on discussion about the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel. The owner, Tom Crawford, has received a \$1M grant for renovation. This grant requires a \$1M match. Mr. Grieser is also in the process of creating a draft ordinance that will help to preserve historic structures and require an applicant to go to a conditional use hearing before any historic structure could be demolished. The members are working on an inventory lists of properties that they think should be considered for preservation. Ms. Spencer asked if an owner could opt out. Mr. Grieser said that the standards would be decided by the committee, but the owner would have the ability to challenge it. Ms. Kernen noted that she is working with Lisa Minardi to build the list and also has plans to consult with George & Martha Kriebel.

COMMUNICATIONS: Ms. Spencer reported that the newsletter is almost finished and should go out in the next few days. She also noted that at the time of the logo contest, two logos were actually chosen. The larger, more colorful version that is now on display both outside and inside Borough Hall and a black and white version that is a little more adaptable. She is in talks with the artist to tweak the lettering and colors so that the logos will be more similar.

CPVRPC: Ms. Beckius noted that the majority of their last meeting focused on a large parcel that is partially located in Schwenksville, Perkiomen Township and Lower Frederick. The developer that has a project in mind for this unique property was there to answer questions and brainstorm about some of the issues that will need to be addressed regarding zoning and storm water runoff on this property. There was also discussion regarding the municipalities that have townhouse developments under construction.

CTMA: Ms. McKinney reported that they paid bills and had an executive session regarding a personnel issue. They also discussed the forty-four manhole covers that will need to be leveled once the new paving is finished on Main Street.

PUBLIC WORKS: Ms. McKinney said they discussed what to do with the funds of CD's that are coming to term.

LPVRS: No report

PARKS: Ms. Costello noted there is a meeting coming up tomorrow (Mar 4) at 7PM. She reported that Naman (Eagle Scout) is moving forward with the GAGA pit at Collegeville Park. She ask Mr. Grieser to explain the new Ordinance to be considered.

Mr. Grieser asked for approval of Ordinance 604 that will allow Council to make changes to the park rules by resolution in the future.

MOTION to approve Ordinance 604 by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Spencer

MOTION carries 7-0

PERSONNEL: No report

STREETS, PUBLIC SAFETY & LIGHTING: Mr. Farr noted that there was a traffic study done regarding Park Ave, Clahor Ave and 9th Ave. He asked Ms. Twardowski if she would post the study on the website so everyone can see it. Mr. Grieser said that he will confirm that the study is approved to be published and advise Ms. Twardowski if/when she can post it. Mr. Farr reported that there is a letter going out to the residents on Park and all the streets off Park Ave explaining the intention to install speed pillows. He hopes that residents will respond and give their thoughts before the final decision is made.

Ms. Priazad asked when the other streets will be addressed. Mr, Farr told Ms. Priazad that the other streets will have to wait as the Borough does not have the funds to address them this year. We also will need to evaluate the effectiveness of them.

Connection with Mr. Farr was lost.

Ms. Priazad asked if it could be considered to add a bike lane on Clahor. She and her neighbors think that would slow the traffic. Mr. Farr said he will look into it.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

ENGINEER: Mr. Leh said his office has received a revised Land Development plan for the Freeland Square project and that it is under review. They plan to be at the Planning Commission meeting on March 18 and before Council at the April meeting looking for final approval. The ATM project at the Redner's Shopping Center is on hold awaiting revisions. Mr. Leh also noted that there is a hole in the decking of the 8th Avenue culvert. He noted that Mr. Hastings is ordering a plate to cover the hole which should last for a year, but that the culvert will need to be completely replaced within the next year or two. He noted the paving projects for this year on 4th Ave and Clamer Ave. He requested approval to advertise the bids for these projects.

MOTION to approve sending the paving projects out for bid by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Spencer

MOTION carries 7-0

Mr. Hoffmann asked if any other culverts are on the list for replacement. Mr. Leh said the one on 5th Ave needs work, but not as imminently as the one on 8th Ave. Mr. Hoffmann asked if there is any financial incentive to do both at the same time. Mr. Leh said he did inquire about a discount, and was told only about 5-10% discount could be expected. These projects cost approximately \$500K per culvert.

SOLICITOR: Mr. Grieser reported that along with the previously discussed Land Development, he has been working on revising our outdated sign ordinance as well as a historic structure ordinance. He also asked Council to approve an electric line easement for a property in Trappe. Because the Public Works campus is jointly owned by Collegeville and Trappe, our Council needs to sign the easement that will provide Public Works access for a well.

MOTION to approve the electric line easement by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Beckius

MOTION carries 7-0

MANAGER: Ms. Twardowski noted the Perkiomen Watershed Clean Up day is to be April 10. They are asking for volunteers. She said the information will be posted on our website, Facebook and in our Newsletter. She reported that there is Zoning Hearing Board meeting on March 23 via ZOOM for the 360 8th Avenue project. This involves adding a flag lot to an existing property. The owners are seeking a special exception for relief from the width of the driveway and for the flag lot.

Ms. Twardowski asked Council for their input regarding signing a 60 month contract for energy. That term would give us a price of \$.04199 per KW and is lower than what is being offered by PECO (currently \$.0677 per KW). As energy prices do not seem to be trending down, this could offer savings over the five year term. Ms. Spencer asked Ms. Twardowski if she had gotten prices from any companies that use renewable energy. She noted that it has been discussed over the years that Collegeville adapt a climate action plan. She feels may be necessary to “walk the walk” so to speak and possibly pay a little more for renewable energy. Ms. Twardowski said she will do more research.

POLICE: Chief Bucher noted his report on file and there were no questions.

FIRE: Mr. Kuklinski noted there were 26 incidents for the month and a total of 409 service hours to the community. Collegeville, Perkiomen and Trappe Fire Companies are partnering to provide coverage hours in the evening.

MOTION to approve Resolution 2021-10 for a Regional Duty Crew by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Beckius

MOTION carries 7-0

MAYOR: Mayor Wright-Riggins praised the team we have at the Borough and noted how much he enjoyed a recent lunch meeting he had with Ms. Twardowski. He and Ms. Twardowski brainstormed about starting a “State of The Borough” report that would explain where we are with regards to projects and budgets and where we are headed. He looks forward to preparing this report and presenting it to Council and the residents.

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

MOTION carries 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENT: No comments

Meeting Adjourned 9:16 PM