

COLLEGEVILLE BOROUGH
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 1, 2019 7:00PM
Location – Collegeville Fire Company Building

The meeting was called to order at 7PM by Council President Marion McKinney.

Ms. McKinney noted that there was an executive session before the meeting to discuss two real estate matters.

ROLL CALL: Council President Marion McKinney, Council Pro Tem Cathy Kernen, Council Member Gary Hoffmann, Council Member Shannon Spencer, Council Member Terri Stagliano, Council Member Louise Tulio, Council Member Hugh Braun and Mayor Aidsand Wright-Riggins. Also in attendance were Engineer Dave Leh, Solicitor Sean Kilkenny, Borough Manager Geoff Thompson, Police Chief Bucher and Administrative Assistant Suzanne Robertson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. McKinney noted that at the last meeting she requested that Mr. Braun take over the Public Safety Committee. He agreed. Mr. Hoffmann is joining the committee. Police and Fire are invited! **MOTION** to approve the amended minutes from the April 3rd Council Meeting by Ms. Tulio with a second by Mr. Braun. **MOTION** carries 7-0

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Budget & Finance: Mr. Thompson asked for approval of the Treasurer's Report and for check #'s 3593-3654. **MOTION** to approve by Ms. Stagliano with a second by Ms. Spencer. **MOTION** carries 7-0

Business Development: Ms. McKinney stated that she met with Mr. Barth along with Ms. Stagliano and Ms. Spencer. She said that from that meeting, she gained a clear understanding of the proposal. They discussed the successes and failures of previous projects and she was satisfied that this is a positive plan for the Borough. She said that is why she requested this larger space for the meeting; so that all could see the proposal. Mr. Barth showed his slide presentation outlining his plan to revitalize Collegeville Borough. He said this journey started several months ago with a presentation to the Business Development Committee. He stated that what he is really good at is having an eye on the big picture and how all the parts fit together. He will look at the Borough as a whole. Mr. Barth said that once the process begins, revenue starts to flow. Property values go up which allows for higher transfer taxes on resales. More employers and employees bring in tax dollars. He introduced Michelle Shire. Ms. Shire has a background in retail management and marketing. She said that their plan is to bring in new businesses and for them to prosper and stay. She said that she works to come up with creative ways for companies to thrive and complement each other. One of the things they do is have ribbon cuttings for all new business openings. It is important to show support for new business owners. They will be researching DIY and experience based companies. That is a popular trend. Ms. Stagliano asked how many years they have worked with Perkasi. Mr. Barth said 6 years, with Hatboro for 8 and New Hope for 2. Ms. Stagliano said that the average is about 5 years, so this plan would not just be for the year. Mr. Barth said that we are starting with a year and if the Borough does not see positive change happening, then it is our option to cut ties. He said that, realistically, it does take a few years for large projects to come to fruition. But, he also said that positive change will happen almost immediately. He assured the room that he is very good at what he does. He expects that we will start to see good results quickly. The foundation will be laid in this first year. Ms. Stagliano voiced her concerns that the council members are the stewards of the town, and as such, have a responsibility to make proper use of taxpayer dollars. She worries that this expense will be ongoing past the year commitment. She questioned why residents should pay for a service that will help a business owner. Why wouldn't the business owners pay toward the revitalization since they will benefit. Mr. Barth commented that if that were ever going to happen, it would have already. He stressed that this revitalization plan will benefit the residents very much. If property values go up 10% as anticipated, that is of great value to all. Ms. McKinney credited Ms. Spencer with bringing up the point

that the shopping centers need to be included in the plan-not just Main St. She likes the idea of the borough being looked at as a whole for growth. Ms. Spencer added that it would be great to have accessibility from the trail for walkers and bicycles to restaurants and shops. Ms. Stagliano asked if Ursinus College is willing to make use some of their vacant buildings available for rent. Mr. Barth said that yes, they have. This shows the support the college is willing to show. He said they will actually be losing money by allowing their buildings to be rented. Those buildings will no longer be tax exempt. That brings in more revenue for the borough. Mr. Braun stated that he feels this is something that should be brought up at budget time, not the middle of the year. He said that while \$25K may not seem like a lot of money to Mr. Barth, it is to us. His concern is that Ursinus College may not continue to support the program and then what? Ms. Tulio asked the size of New Britain. Ms. Shire said 1.2 miles. Ms. Tulio said she has spoken with 20-30 residents since the last meeting and that none of them had received the survey. She does not feel we should move forward until we are assured that most residents are in favor of it. Mr. Barth restated that it will cost roughly \$4-\$5 per resident for this plan.

Larry DiPiano 345 Avon Ave.: Agreed about not spending taxpayer money to profit a private enterprise. Question: in the past, the borough had contract with county planning commission...is that still in place? It had been a budgeted item. It seems to me we are paying twice for same service. Ms. McKinney said we have not had that contract in the last 5-6 years. They did come back with a plan back then, but that is very different from the proposal now. Mr. Barth said at his company, they are “doers” not “planners”.

Craig Farr 163 Stine Dr.: Look at all the pieces. Ursinus College is putting up half the money. He feels that in a few years we will make the investment back and then some. Mr. Barth said he expects it not to take a couple years to start seeing profits. It will happen quickly. Mr. Farr thinks it is a small amount to spend for the expected return.

Stephanie Stoyanov 260 Carmen Dr.: Ms. Stoyanov asked how many consultants the CEDC interviewed. Ms. McKinney said the CEDC had nothing to do with it. Ms. Kernan said that Ursinus College looked at 4 or 5 consultants. The Business Development Committee brought Mr. Barth in because he was the only one that had experience with a borough our size. He was also had the most reasonable fees. She and members of the committee visited Perkasio, Hatboro and New Britain. They talked to business owners and got glowing reviews about Mr. Barth. Ms. Stoyanov noted this was driven by Ursinus College. She requested a town hall meeting to ensure that everyone in the borough knows about this and is on board. She feels the percentage that replied to the survey was very low and may not reflect the views of most residents. Ms. Kernan said they used the CEDC mailing list because they don't have the email address of every resident. Ms. Stoyanov said they should have used more ways to contact people—a mailer? She feels not enough work was done to reach the residents.

Brian Dubas 315 R Glad Way: Mr. Dubas said that we had gone down this road 15 years ago. He feels that by pushing for more coffee shops and restaurants we are, in effect, pushing out the business owners we have that have been here for years. He stated that the Chamber of Commerce did this same type of thing for free. He feels it is a lot of money for something that has already been tried.

Mike Gilinger 201 11th Ave.: Mr. Gilinger thinks we can do this on our own if we remove barriers from the zoning laws. He feels that the school district is the problem. He feels the school taxes are a huge burden, especially for seniors. He feels that businesses will come if zoning will allow. He is not for the consultant.

Mr. Barth stated that this town was built before zoning laws existed. In the 60's, things were labeled not as we would want them today. People like us can be imaginative to work through and make solutions for things to move through. If the zoning could have been changed on your own, why was it not already?

Alex Tweedie 316 Colonial: Mr. Tweedie said someone needs to take a 10,000 foot view. He feels the business owners are only looking out for themselves. The master plan would have to solve the parking issue. Is that why we are losing new businesses? I don't know, but I feel someone needs to work on it.

Craig Penuel 208 W 5th Ave.: Mr. Penuel suggested it be put out as a voter referendum. Mr. Kilkenny said that does not apply here. Council will decide.

Russell Mittman 362 Carmen Dr.: Mr. Mittman said he has been in the borough for 26 years. He feels this is a prime opportunity while the college is willing to work with the borough. It seems logical to take advantage of that.

Mike Koenig 252 Freeland Dr.: Mr. Koenig asked Mr. Barth if we had had him at the time of the sale of the Rees building, would it have been a benefit. Townhouses would have been better than the concrete place. The building is a dump.

Mr. Barth said that he would have worked to make that something everyone would have wanted there. You would have the benefit of our 25 years' worth of contacts.

Chuck Draksler 484 Shakespeare Dr.: Mr. Draksler expressed concern with spot zoning, specifically the Ursinus property that is being considered for Steel City. If the zoning change is approved, will it stay if they leave? Or will it revert back to what it was. Mr. Thompson said we that the Zoning Hearing Board can write up their Decision any way they we want. It can be noted that the zoning change is for this specific purpose. Mr. Thompson said he understands that concern. Mr. Draksler said he is worried about changing the character of the street.

Tim Vuotto 525 Locust St.: Mr. Vuotto said he has plenty of parking. He was curious about the property behind Marzella's. He said he wanted to buy the old St. Eleanor's school. He wanted to rent it to the borough and police.

Linda Farr 163 Stine Dr.: Ms. Farr expressed her concerned about the Perkiomen Hotel. She said it is an eyesore and embarrassment that people see whenever they come in to our town. Why has this not been addressed? The half empty shopping centers are a problem too. She is in favor of the project. We need help.

Craig Penuel 208 W 5th Ave.: Mr. Penuel said he has heard people making disparaging remarks about Trans Fleet at this meeting and the last. He wanted to point out that Trans Fleet has been more than fair with the Fire Company. They have been in the borough for a very long time; they pay taxes and employ a lot of people. They let the Fire Co use their building for as long as was necessary for free and also gave them concrete for the new Fire House at cost. He feels they have invested heavily in the borough and he thinks it is unfair that people speak negatively about them. Ms. McKinney said no one on council has said anything negative about Trans Fleet. Mr. Penuel said he was more speaking to the crowd.

Jane Deitrick 467 E Main St.: Ms. Deitrick expressed concern with the changes "revitalization" will have on the people that live on Main St. Traffic is already a huge problem. She does not want drunk people walking past her house. She is worried about the element that will come with more bars.

Ms. Stagliano said she completely understands what Ms. Deitrick is saying and sympathizes with her. She asked if we are neglecting those residents that live on Main St that don't necessarily want it busier. She is worried about parking complaints. She said that if Ursinus wants a more vital Main Street, let them pay for it! She said this is her opinion and why she ran for Council.

Andrea Baptist 218 Militia court: Ms. Baptiste said that there was \$8000 in the budget for planning services back in 2011 and it was shelved. This is not a new idea. We have capable people on Council and professional people in the borough. These are volunteers and are not able to spend the time to recruit businesses to move us in the right direction. There are some things we can do in house, but not the whole plan. Ms. Baptiste asked Council to please vote for the plan so we can progress. Surrounding communities are moving forward and we need to also.

Mr. Kilkenny asked for clarification. The one year contract is \$50K with a 60 day notice for termination and they will be reporting to Mr. Thompson on a regular basis.

Ms. Tulio asked if we will have a full time person. Mr. Barth said it will be two days per week between he and Ms. Shire based on need. Ms. Shire said they are not punching a clock. She routinely answers texts and emails in the evening. The time actually spent in the borough will be minimal.

John Doman 260 Carmen Dr.: Mr. Doman asked for all taxpayers to be surveyed before this moves forward. He feels everyone should be heard.

Rob Muth 314 Sonnet Dr.: Mr. Muth asked about success fees.

Mr. Barth said this is common for consultants. There would be a percentage only for large scale projects. Mr. Muth asked if that will be in the contract. Mr. Kilkenny said this is a general motion and there will be more detail later.

Michelle Evans 43 W 5th Ave.: Ms. Evans said the traffic on 5th Ave is not safe now. She is concerned hearing about more bars and restaurants. She said she cannot leave her kids out to play in the front yard now. She also thinks more people should be notified before this gets voted through.

Mr. Barth said they are looking to put in art galleries, bookstores and shops...not just bars and restaurants. He said there are measures that can be taken for traffic calming.

Valerie Beckius: Ms. Beckius feels at \$5 per resident, it is worth trying for a year.

Ms. McKinney said that as she is listening to people complain that residents have not been reached, she wants to express that these meetings are posted on the website and Facebook. Everyone is welcome to come to meetings and volunteer on committees and not very many people do. We have been voted in to make decisions like this. This issue is not being pushed off any longer. It will be decided tonight.

MOTION to approve hiring Mr. Barth by Ms. McKinney with a second by Ms. Spencer.

Stephanie Stoyanov 260 Carmen Dr.: Ms. Stoyanov said that with all due respect, council was elected to represent the entire community, not 3%.

Ms. Stagliano said that since Ursinus College will directly benefit from this she is requesting that Ms. McKinney and Ms. Spencer recuse themselves because their spouses are employed by the college. She said something similar went before the Ethics Committee and it was ruled that they must. Mr. Kilkenny said that it is their option to recuse, but they are not required. Ms. Spencer said that one could make the argument that anything that happens in Collegeville that would cater to students benefits the college. In that scenario, we wouldn't be able to vote. This initiative benefits the whole town, not just the college. I

am voting as a resident. I will not recuse myself. Ms. McKinney said she will not recuse either. Ms. Spencer said she will recuse herself when it comes to the Steel City vote.

Roll Call Vote: Kernan – Yes, Braun – No, Tulio – N, McKinney – Yes, Stagliano – No, Spencer – Yes, Hoffmann - Yes

Yes = 4, No = 3 **MOTION** carries

Communications: No report

Community Engagement & Service: No report

CPVRPC: No report

CTMA and Public Works: No report

Parks: Ms. Stagliano said the Concerts in the Park are as follows:

June 13 Brass Pocket
June 27 Class of 84
July 11 River of Dreams

Ms. Stagliano also thanked Steve at Ursinus for refacing the dugout. She said it saved us a lot of money!

Personnel: No report

Planning Commission: No report, but will meet this month

Public Safety: Mr. Braun said there was no report, but any committee members present please stay after meeting for a few minutes!

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Engineer: Mr. Leh said the CBDG project agreements have been signed and will start in a couple months. The paving project will start in the next couple of weeks. His office received a minor land request at 331-341 W Main for a parking lot expansion.

Solicitor: Mr. Kilkenny worked on a motion to draft and advertise for 9 properties regarding the joint wells with Trappe. Mr. Kikenny requested a motion to authorize an ordinance to convey ownership of properties well properties. **MOTION** by Ms. Tulio, second by Ms. Stagliano, **MOTION** carries 7-0.

Manager/Zoning Officer: Mr. Thompson was notified by PennDOT that there will be occasional lane closures on the Perkiomen Bridge due to repairs beginning the end of May and running through the middle of August.

Police: Chief Bucher attended a meeting in Lower Providence regarding the bridge lane closures. He brought up to them the potential problems with that since our lights through 3rd Ave are synced. There will be another meeting with PennDOT to discuss that next week. On April 27th we hosted another Drug Take Back Day that was very successful. 62 people came in and 154 lbs. of drugs were brought dropped off. He also asked for approval for the new Police vehicle. **MOTION** by Ms. Stagliano with a second by Ms. Tulio. **MOTION** carries 7-0

Collegetown Fire Company: Ms. McKinney thanked Mr. Freas for hosting the meeting this month. Mr. Freas said there were 27 calls last month with an average response time of 10.5 minutes. The Open House for the new Firehouse will be on June 1st at noon. There will be food, drinks, tours and presentations. All are welcome.

Mayor's Report:

- Participated in the Tri-County Commemoration Committee on April 11th planning to mark the 400th Anniversary of enslaved Africans arriving In Point Comfort, Virginia in August of 1619
- Performed a wedding at Municipal Hall April 12, 2019
- Hosted Actor and Preforming Artist, Colman Domingo at the Faith and Life Forum held at Ursinus College on April 13th, 2019
- Spoke and led a workshop at the Social Justice Week forum at Perkiomen Valley High School on April 18th
- Represented the Borough along with Council President at the Katie Muth Town Hall meeting on April 24th.

MOTION to approve the Administrative and Committee reports by Ms. Spencer with a second by Mr. Braun. 7-0 **MOTION** carries

PUBLIC DISCUSSION (Items not on the agenda)

John Costello 62 E 3rd Ave.: Does the paving go to E 3rd? Mr. Leh said yes, to the end.

Mike Gallagher 201 11th Ave.: Mr. Gallagher said the Municipal Authority is a great neighbor, but he wondered if it was possible to get some plantings to buffer from the dust and unsightliness. He also noted that there seems to be a lot of sediment at the bottom of the new bridge on 11th Ave. He asked that someone take a look. Mr. Leh said he would send someone to assess.

Bill McMaster 35 W 5th Ave.: Mr. McMaster said he is still having water issues. He asked about the status of the held escrow. He said this has been going on for 16 months. He said he sent pictures. Mr. Leh said that the pictures were from a day of heavy rain. What he needs to see is a few days later. Mr. Leh said he has sent someone to look a few days after a rain and the drain is working. There was a sump pump that was spilling out, but that was fixed and is working properly now. Mr. McMaster said that has created a mud ditch. He said it is a violation for that home to change the water flow on his property. He said he hired a landscaper to address it and was told that he couldn't help in his yard until the other issue from above is fixed. Anything he does will just wash away. He said his yard is sinking and he cannot afford to sue the builder. Ms. McKinney asked Mr. Leh how we can help. Mr. Leh said all we can do is check to make sure the system that was installed is working properly. He said it should improve now that grass is growing. He said the escrow can be held until we are satisfied. Ms. Spencer asked how much that is. Mr. Leh said about \$6600. Mr. Leh said he has offered to meet with Mr. McMaster and will do that. Everyone agreed that it is better to meet on site rather than rely on pictures.

Matt Evans 43 W 5th Ave.: Mr. Evans agreed with Mr. McMaster that it is a major problem. He is concerned about his new slab for his barn. He said his kids cannot play in the backyard. There are tons of mosquitos.

Eric Bollan 53 W 5th Ave.: Mr. Bollan lives at the bottom of the street by the cemetery. He has had the water department out and they cannot believe how much water is still there 10 days after a storm. He believes it all started when the builder began excavating the basements. Is it possible they disrupted an underground spring? Our backyards are unusable. He said Trinity Church is concerned because they may not have enough grave plots because of this.

Jim Gainor 711 Chestnut St. Mr. Gainor is concerned about 3 bordering properties that are being sold. He asked for the status. Mr. Kilkenny said we have no information about that.

ACTION ITEMS

Consideration of Ordinance No. 595, Smart Water Meter Opt-Out: **MOTION** to approve the Smart Water Meter Opt-Out by Ms. Stagliano with a second by Ms. Spencer, **MOTION** carries 7-0

Consideration of Resolution No. 2019-07, Opposing HB 349 Requiring Municipalities to Retain Two Third Party Building Code Inspection Agencies: Mr. Thompson said it is unnecessary to get 2 services. **MOTION** to approve the opposition by Ms. Stagliano with a second by Ms. Spencer, **MOTION** carries 7-0

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Kilkenny said that the property that the borough owns at 8th & Chestnut will be advertised and the appraisal will go out for bid. Ms. Spencer asked if the properties on 8th have been sold. Mr. Thompson said does not know yet. He said he was approached to see if we would be willing to sell the corner. Mr. Kilkenny said there will be an open and transparent process when the time comes.

Ms. Kernan said the Memorial Day Parade will begin at 10AM on May 27th at Augustus Lutheran and end at Waterworks Park. There will be rides, games and food trucks.

MEETING ADJOURNED 9:43 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Geoffrey Thompson, Secretary