

COLLEGEVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Council President Cathy Kernen at 6:30PM.

ROLL CALL: Council President Cathy Kernen, VP Gary Hoffmann, PPT Craig Farr, Marion McKinney (via ZOOM), Kathy Costello and Valarie Beckius.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Solicitor Rebecca Geiser, Engineer David Leh, Police Chief Bart Bucher, Manager Tamara Twardowski and Assistant Suzanne Robertson.

MOTION to approve the minutes from the August meeting by Costello with a second by Beckius

MOTION carries 6-0

Mayor Aidsand Wright-Riggins swore in our new Council Member, Damien Brewster. Mr. Brewster then joined the other Council Members at the table.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

John Pearson, Township Supervisor from Upper Providence: Mr. Pearson presented information for The Wall that Heals Vietnam Veterans Memorial Replica and Mobile Education Center exhibit that is coming to Anderson Farm Park in October. He is requesting volunteers and attendance at the event.

Scott Martin, Council President of Trappe Borough: Mr. Martin came to the meeting with Trappe residents Mike and Linda Ricci (33 Clayhor Ave) – The Ricci's are requesting assistance with a storm drain that is continually clogged on the Collegeville Borough side that is causing flooding to their property during heavy rains. Mr. Farr said that this topic will be discussed at the Streets & Public Safety meeting at the end of the month.

Warren Lewis – Landscaper-Wayne, PA – Mr. Lewis came before Council to request permission to "beautify" the area in front of the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel as well as across the street in front of the Stong Flooring building. Ms. Kernen thanked him for his offer, but said she would need to see something tangible to decide if the Borough is interested. Mr. Lewis said he will email his renderings to Ms. Twardowski.

Aileen Johnson, Schwenksville Public Library – Ms. Johnson gave an update on happenings at the Library and dropped off copies of their fall newsletter. They have added a yoga class on Monday evenings and their fall book sale will be on Friday, September 22 from 4:30 PM – 6 PM and Saturday, September 23 from 9AM-2PM. They are seeking grants to update their building to current ADA standards.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BUDGET & FINANCE:

MOTION to approve check #6636-6383 and disbursements in the amount of \$339,075.26 by Beckius with a second by Costello

MOTION carries 7-0

Mr. Hoffman presented a power point presentation depicting the mid-year budget review. He reported that he does not anticipate a need to raise taxes as the numbers are tracking as expected. He and Ms. Twardowski will begin budget planning for 2024 in October. Mr. Farr asked about the slight drop in the fire tax funds. Ms. Twardowski said she needs to investigate that as she was unsure of that figure also.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Ms. Kernen explained that the funds received from the RACP grant can be saved for up to ten years. We have received \$500K and \$2.5M respectively from the last two applications. These funds are to be used for revitalization and to create jobs. These are reimbursement grants and require very specific conditions be met. The original intent was to make upgrades to Borough Hall. Ursinus has hired Core Development to redesign the Marzella's, Commonwealth and Maples buildings and make them mixed use facilities. There will be retail/restaurants on the first floor with over 100 apartments above. It has now been decided that a better use of the funds would be to partner with Ursinus and create shared parking behind all the Ursinus owned properties along the 400 block of Main Street.

Mr. Hoffmann wanted to confirm that by changing the scope we would not be giving tacit approval to any/all of Ursinus' plans. Ms. Kernen said that we are not.

Ms. McKinney asked when we can expect to see the plans. Ms. Kernen said that the partnership with Core Development is recent, but that as soon as possible plans will be brought to Council.

Mr. Hoffmann asked if they will also be brought to the sub-committees. He expressed that the budget and safety committees would like input as these they will be impacted. Ms. Twardowski said the process will be similar to that of the Freeland Square project. Even though these plans are permitted use on the sites by zoning, they will need conditional use approval.

Mr. Farr asked how much a parking lot like this will cost. Ms. Kernen said that they do not have an answer for that yet, but that it will be expensive. A project like this will need storm water review, lighting, curbing and many other costly considerations. We will be allowing Ursinus to access our grant funds and they will have to do the matching part of the funding.

Ms. McKinney asked if Borough Hall is staying at its current location. Ms. Kernen confirmed that is.

Ms. McKinney asked about the tax implications of these new buildings as the college is currently tax exempt. Ms. Twardowski explained that once those lots are not used as university buildings, the exempt status goes away and they will be taxable.

Ms. Beckius asked if there was a worry of burdening the school district by adding this many units. Ms. Kernen said they don't expect so as they will be marketed to young singles and professional couples. She also noted that the college is exploring options for residents to take classes or utilize the cafeteria at discounted rates as incentives.

Ms. Twardowski noted that there was a chat question asked if anyone has a connection to Urban Partners. She said they she does not know of any and that she heard of them through a contact in East Norriton Township that had used them for grant assistance.

MOTION to approve applying for an additional \$3M grant this year by Hoffmann with a second by Beckius

MOTION carries 7-0

MOTION to approve changing the scope of the grant proposal from Borough Hall to the creation of shared parking behind the buildings on the 400 block of Main Street by Farr with a second by McKinney

MOTION carries 7-0

MOTION to approve terminating our agreement with the Montgomery County Redevelopment Authority as grant administrator and move forward with Urban Partners being the new grant administrator by Brewster with a second by Costello

MOTION carries 7-0

CPVRPC: Ms. Beckius noted there was no meeting in August, but the committee will meet on September 18. They plan to finalize the comprehensive plan. She also asked everyone to complete the survey that is available online and on the back table.

CTMA/PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Farr noted that the committees approved the final escrow release to Royal Farms. They are considering alternate representation for the committees as they have been having trouble coordinating the schedules of the members. The committee continues to discuss alternatives to deal with the PFOA issue in the water. They are also investigating grants to help with the cost of either treating the water or hooking in to North Penn Water Authority. Mr. Hoffmann asked if they have completed the five year budget plan. Mr. Farr said that they had and he will get it to him.

LPVRSa: Ms. Twardowski reported for Ms. Stagliano. There were 12 EDU's this month. They received a clean draft audit report. The final report will be delivered this month. Alan Myers spread topsoil and grass seed. The conservation district will inspect it later in the fall. The plant had no violations. Two employees are taking classes for their operator licenses.

PARKS: Ms. Costello thanked Joe Selzer the Montgomery County Parks department for helping with the bench and fencing at the 3rd Avenue trailhead. Bigg Romeo band is scheduled to play at the park on September 28 at 6:30PM.

PERSONNEL:

MOTION to approve Resolution 2023-12 to enact a Junior Council Person program by Beckius with a second by Farr

MOTION carries 7-0

Ms. Costello explained that the purpose of the program is to engage students in the government process and allow for Council members to mentor students. The Junior Council Member will attend all Council meetings. Applicants must be a Borough resident and go through an application process that will include an interview by the personnel committee and a representative from Perkiomen Valley High School.

Ms. Kernan noted that Dean Miller and Tom Gamble have both resigned from the Planning Commission and we are in need of two new members. The Planning Commission is a seven member advisory board that reviews sub-division, land development and other projects in the Borough. There is more information and the complete volunteer job description on our website and will be in the September newsletter. Education and training is provided.

STREETS & PUBLIC SAFETY: Mr. Farr noted that there was no meeting in August, but that 33 Clahor Avenue will be their main focus at the September meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

ENGINEER:

MOTION to approve the final escrow release for WB Homes (contingent on receipt of a maintenance bond) in the amount of \$139,141.40 by Farr with a second by Brewster

MOTION carries 7-0

MOTION to approve the final escrow release to MDX for the 8th Avenue culvert (contingent on receipt of a maintenance bond) in the amount of \$44,551.43 by Costello with a second by Beckius

MOTION carries 7-0

Mr. Leh noted that work on the Creekside Park will begin in a few weeks.

Ms. Beckius noted that residents may see some large equipment on 11th Avenue near the culvert and wanted all to know that the culvert is fine; it is just for a Public Works wall repair project.

SOLICITOR: Ms. Geiser noted that the planting at Glenwood Reserve is scheduled for September 18 even though the Conservation District review will not be finished prior to that. The builder does not want to hold up the planting and miss the proper season. Ms. Geiser noted that she is set to appear before the Court of Common Pleas with Mr. Crawford in early October regarding the injunction against the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel. She explained that if the judge upholds our citations again, Mr. Crawford will have another opportunity to appeal.

MANAGER: Ms. Twardowski explained the MMO contribution that is part of our budget each year that covers Borough employees as well as Public Works employees (they reimburse us)

MOTION to approve the non-uniform MMO contribution in the amount of \$120,004.00 by Costello with a second by Brewster

MOTION carries 7-0

POLICE: Chief Bucher gave an update about the burglary that happened last week in the Borough. They feel confident that they know the perpetrator and are waiting for DNA results to confirm.

MOTION to approve the uniform MMO contribution in the amount of \$168,671.00 by Costello with a second by Brewster

MOTION carries 7-0

MOTION to approve two Fire Police requests: Lower Providence Hero run on Sept 30 (rain date Oct 1) and Sellersville Gallery of the Arts Event on Sept 17 by Beckius with a second by Brewster

MOTION carries 7-0

Chief Bucher shared a note of admiration sent in by a resident to Officer Andrew Sohl for his professional and kind treatment of an elderly neighbor that had been the victim of the above noted break in.

FIRE: No report

AMBULANCE: Mr. Long reported 16 calls in the borough and a total of 83 calls from the Collegeville Station. FVMR attended trainings and many events in the month of August.

Mr. Hoffmann noted that he attended the Advisory Board meeting for the ambulance company and was told they are working their way to a full staff. Mr. Long confirmed that they are working toward that goal and their response times have been good.

Ms. Beckius asked if they take all calls to the same place. Mr. Long explained that they try to take a patient to the closest place available, but will defer to a patient request when possible.

MAYOR: No report

MOTION to approve all reports by Farr with a second by Hoffmann

MOTION carries 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Marion McKinney 275 E 9th Ave – Ms. McKinney asked if there was any more information about the developer from the last meeting and his project and the purchase of 942 & 944 E Main Street from Ursinus College. Ms. Twardowski said she has not heard anything more, but believes Mr. Kulp is still investigating his options.

Craig Farr 163 Stine Drive – Mr. Farr thanked Ms. Beckius and Ms. Costello and the community for their work and donations at the Food Drive last weekend at Redner's Market.

Ms. Kernan noted that the Dinner & a Show collaboration with Ursinus is starting up the season with *Two Gentlemen of Verona* on September 28.

MEETING ADJOURNED 8:23PM

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tamara Twardowski