

Borough Council Work Session

April 17, 2023

The monthly Work Session meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held in the rear Conference Room of the Souderton Municipal Building on the above date, was called to order by President Tracy Burke at 7:00 p.m. The Borough Council Work Session was attended by the following members and staff:

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| President Tracy W. Burke | Mayor Daniel Yocum |
| Vice-President Edward Huber | Junior Councillor Elijah S. Steglik |
| Councillor Matthew DiNenna | |
| Councillor Julie Munden | Borough Manager P. Michael Coll |
| Councillor Donna M. Rogers | Police Chief Brian A. Newhall |
| Councillor Courtnee Wampole | Public Works Director Steven Coll |

POLICE ITEMS

Police Chief Brian Newhall summarized recent police activities. The department is averaging 25 calls per day. The department has completed approximately 40% of the annual mandatory training. The Souderton Police Facebook page is up and running.

Chief Newhall reported on a partnership with Downtown Scoop to award children in recognition of great work. Downtown Scoop is providing gift certificates for one scoop of ice cream.

Souderton Police initiated a policy to address noise complaints associated with modified vehicle exhaust systems. Chief Newhall explained that modifications to factory installed exhaust systems is in violation of the vehicle code. Vehicles with modified exhaust systems will be cited.

Souderton Police will participate with neighboring departments to promote and assist with the Drug Takeback Program on April 22, 2023.

Borough Council discussed a concern about parking on W. Chestnut Street with the planned opening of Branch Creek Brewery at 30 W. Chestnut Street. The brewery executed a shared parking agreement with Univest Bank and Trust Company to use the adjoining parking lot. Borough Council did not want to consider permit parking, but acknowledged that future consideration and monitoring of parking issues will be necessary on Chestnut Street and also on S. Front Street.

HIGHWAY ITEMS

Public Works Director Steven Coll summarized public works activities for the

month. Monthly brush collection is complete. Mowing started in the parks with assistance from our regular part time employee and one full time employee. The Borough is looking for one part time summer help employee. The wheel loader was serviced, needing more repairs than anticipated.

LVL Engineering staked out the ADA ramps at Broad Street and Washington Avenue that will need to be replaced prior to paving W. Broad Street. LVL Engineering completed the plans for the ramps and there is an approved Permit with PennDOT to install the new ramps. The Borough is looking for PennDOT approval to modify one of the ramp locations directly across from the Broad Theater.

Funding was included in the 2023 Budget to purchase a used dump truck through C & S Lawn and Landscape. The truck was formerly owned by a municipal township and comes complete with a slat spreader and snow plow. The complete purchase price is \$60,000. The Borough will be listing a Ford ten wheel dump truck on MunicibiD to help offset the purchase cost. A motion will be recommended to approve the purchase at the May Borough Council meeting. Arrangements have been made to complete the purchase during the week of May 1st following the Borough Council meeting.

The Public Utility Commission held an informal field conference at the request of Northeast Pennsylvania Railroad to discuss consideration to close the grade crossing at Central Avenue. The railroad requested the closure given overall costs to upgrade the signal system and address improvements to storm drainage and the condition of the grade surface. The Public Utility Commission requested comments from Borough Council. Borough Council unanimously expressed opposition to the requested closure.

The community Earth Day clean up event scheduled for April 22nd was postponed given the mild rate of anticipated participation.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Mayor Daniel Yocum discussed the draft “Borough Representation Policy.” This policy addresses the posting of signs on Borough owned property, election signs are not permitted to be posted on Borough property. The Borough will remain neutral. The policy also addresses the digital sign on Main Street and the display of flags on Borough property. The draft policy was circulated to Borough Council and the Borough Solicitor for review and comment. More specifically, Borough Council discussed a request to fly the Pride flag on municipally owned flag poles. Council President Tracy Burke noted that there is a long standing policy to fly only the United States and Pennsylvania flags on municipal poles. Council President Burke further noted that the Borough has a long standing policy to permit the use of our parks to a variety of community groups by reservation. Such groups can reserve the Community Park and Bandshell for their events and they can display various items during the scheduled events but they cannot display flags or banners on the

municipal owned flag poles. Following further discussion a motion was made by Councillor Julie Munden, with a second by Councillor Donna Rogers, to permit Souderton Area For All to display a flag on the flag pole at the Bandshell during their event. The motion failed by a vote of 2 ayes to 4 nays. President Tracy Burke reiterated that Borough Council is not singling out any community group. Groups can use the Borough facilities but not the municipal flag poles in order for the Borough to remain neutral.

DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll discussed a proposed subdivision plan submitted by Gerald Peklak regarding property at W. reliance Road and Harleysville Pike. The proposed plan will adjust property lines of adjoining properties to create a new single family detached building lot on W. Reliance Road. The plan is scheduled for formal review at the May 3rd meeting of the Souderton Planning Commission. The plan is currently under review by the Borough Engineer and Montgomery County Planning Commission.

Borough Manager Michael Coll reviewed the status of the Towne Gate Commons revised land development plan and the location of the Starbucks restaurant at the East Broad Street entrance to the development. The Planning Commission reviewed the architectural renderings for the Starbucks restaurant at their April meeting. Formal review of the revised development plan is in progress. LVL Engineering is reviewing the plan along with the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

The Borough Manager also provided Borough Council with the renderings for the mixed use building to be constructed within the interior core of the Towne Gate Commons development. School lane Development has reached an agreement with a separate builder to construct these buildings. The builder indicated that they intend to retain ownership of the buildings, leasing both the commercial and residential units. The Planning Commission reviewed the renderings at their April meeting with some recommendations to improve the rear of the buildings. Mayor Daniel Yocum expressed concern over the leasing or renting of the residential units, noting that the initial representation was that the residential units would be independently owned.

SANITATION ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll reported that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has recently sent out a draft NPDES permit for the Souderton Waste Water Treatment Plant. The Borough submitted comments on the draft permit and we are in the process of completing additional testing to support our comments.

RECREATION ITEMS

Borough Council discussed progress on preparations for the opening of the

Souderton Community Pool. The committee has elected not to offer a swim lesson program this summer.

PROPERTY ITEMS

The Borough Manager is pushing Phillips and Donovan Architects to complete the plans and bid documents for the Municipal Building renovation project. Gilmore & Associates completed the site survey to provide grade for the building addition along with drainage improvements. Phillips and Donovan believes that they are in a position to formally bid Phase 1 of the project, which includes the basement renovations, crawl space improvements, rear addition and the relocation of mechanical and electrical equipment into the new basement space. The basement storage will be beneficial to the implementation of Phase 2 which will be the complete renovation of the Police Department. Phase 2 specifications and design are nearing completion. A recommendation has been made to consider authorization to formally bid the first phase of the Municipal Building Renovation project. This process will provide Borough Council with firm pricing to consider moving the project forward. This recommendation will be considered at the May Borough Council meeting.

FINANCE ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll is completing the Budget Comparison report for the first quarter which ended March 31, 2023. This report and the fund Balance Sheet reports will be circulated to Borough Council by the end of the week. The Borough Manager further noted that the Tax Anticipation Loan was paid off earlier in April.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Police Chief Brian Newhall requested an Executive Session to discuss police staffing issues. A motion was made by Councillor Julie Munden, seconded by Councillor Matthew DiNenna, to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss police personnel matters. The motion was approved. Following a brief recess, Borough Council adjourned to executive Session at 8:40 pm.

Borough Council reconvened to public session at 9:10 pm and there being no further business, the meeting was promptly adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary