

**Borough Council Work Session**

**July 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 Vice-President Edward Huber at 7:00 p.m. The Borough Council Work Session was attended by the following members and staff:

Vice-President Edward Huber	Mayor Daniel Yocum
Councillor Matthew DiNenna	
Councillor Daryl Littlefield	
Councillor Julie Munden	Borough Manager P. Michael Coll
Councillor Donna M. Rogers	Police Chief Brian A. Newhall
Councillor Richard Walczak	Public Works Director Steven Coll
Councillor Courtney Wampole	

**POLICE ITEMS**

Police Chief Newhall reported that the department has identified the individual that was illegally dumping material in a dumpster maintained by the Souderton Family restaurant. Souderton Police is now working with the owner and the individual to agree on a resolution.

Police Chief Brian Newhall further reported that he needed to replace an AED unit. Chief Newhall will be away on vacation next week and will be designating Detective Joe Rudner as “Officer In Charge” of the department while he is away. Souderton Police has been monitoring the posted stop intersection at Montgomery Avenue and S. Front Street. They found complaints of vehicles running the stop signs to be warranted and they pulled over several vehicles, mostly local residents. Chief Newhall is planning to host a community “Police Academy” in September.

Chief Newhall as met with Souderton Charter School representatives and he has surveyed the current parking restriction that are posted along S. Front Street. The Charter School has reported safety and logistical issues with loading buses at the end of the school day with vehicles parked along the street. Chief Newhall recommended that the existing 2 hour parking restriction signs be replaced with No parking signs at designated hours during the day. A new Ordinance will need to be enacted to match the designated signage and enable enforcement. The Public Safety Committee will work on developing the recommended regulation. In the interim, Borough Manager Michael Coll suggested that Borough Council can consider a motion to enact the restriction for a 90 day trial period per order of the Mayor.

The Public Safety Committee is continuing to evaluate possible revisions to the open burning ordinance as they relate to recreational fires.

## HIGHWAY ITEMS

Public Works Director Steven Coll provided Borough Council with a summary report of public works activities for the month. Annual comprehensive street sweeping throughout the Borough is nearly complete. Only one section remains.

Crews have now set all of the wall retaining blocks and the concrete plaza area is now complete. Crews will be installing a fence along the rear wall running parallel to the railroad tracks. The front of the plaza will be landscaped with a variety of shrubs and a few ornamental trees. The next phase of the site work will be to construct the accessible ramp and complete the new curb and sidewalk in front of the Freight Building.

Borough forces finally addressed complaints with a rattling storm drain manhole lid in the 100 block of Main Street. The old manhole casting was excavating and replaced with a bolt-down manhole frame and lid. Crews continued with cleaning of storm inlets with our vacuum equipment. Some of the older brick inlets will need some repair. A galvanized storm line in the 400 block of N. Second Street will need to be replaced. The pipe floor has completely deteriorated which was discovered by Borough forces when new sewer laterals were installed to the townhomes currently under construction.

Borough forces are cleaning up the old planter beds and dead trees in the Chestnut Street parking lot to make a better appearance for the Third Friday events. A PECO contractor will be restoring utility trenches on Chestnut Street and S. Front Street.

Borough Manager Michael noted that the Road reconstruction projects for 2023 have been advertised for bids. Bids are due on Wednesday, August 2, 2023. The bids will be tabulated and reported to Borough Council at the August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

The Borough Manager Search Committee concluded their second round of interviews on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. A Special Borough Council meeting and Executive Session is scheduled for Wednesday, July 26, 2023. The Committee has decided to bring one candidate to meet and interview with Borough Council on July 26<sup>th</sup>. The Search Committee is hoping to be in a position to recommend appointment of this final candidate to Souderton Borough Council at the September 11, 2023 Borough Council meeting. Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that he is in the process of vacating the manager office and will relocate to the middle office in September to make room for the new Borough Manager. Code Enforcement Officer Steven Toy will relocate to the center conference room. There will be some expense to rearrange telephone, computer access and HVAC equipment. Relocation of the HVAC unit currently serving the rear conference room will need to be relocated to accommodate the planned building addition.

An advertisement has been posted for a full time administrative staff position in the Borough Office. Our secretary will be resigning and relocating from the area in September.

#### DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll reviewed a request from David Sowhangar of the Broad Street Italian Restaurant to reconsider residential apartments on the second floor of their building at 30 W. Broad Street. The Planning Commission was reluctant to recommend a residential use given the lack of off street parking. They were comfortable waiving parking for commercial uses, but not for residential. Broad Street Italian Restaurant and the Broad Theater have since secured an agreement with Univest for the use of their lots. David Sowhangar has been trying to locate a commercial tenant for the second floor without success and believes that he can secure parking for the residential uses through the shared parking agreement with Univest. Borough Council suggested that they return to the Planning Commission for further discussion and consideration.

The Zoning Hearing Board will be meeting on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 to consider the variance application of Powerhouse Soccer, LLC concerning the use of the basement space at 150 S. Front Street.

The Montgomery County Planning Commission commented on the proposed amendment to the Souderton Borough Zoning Ordinance concerning certain signs and murals. The amendment provides for traditional box signs, however, the sign face must be opaque with only the letters and characters lighted. The County planning Commission questioned how the Borough intends to differentiate a mural from artwork. The Ordinance as drafted does not require permits for artwork, but a permit is required for a mural. A suggestion was made to exclude both Souderton Connects and the Souderton-Telford Historic Commission from reviewing or commenting on a mural application, which was supported by the majority of Borough Council members. Borough Council held a lengthy conversation on the merits and scenarios to permit murals and differentiate a mural from a display of artwork. Councillors Daryl Littlefield and Julie Munden recommended to not require any permits for artwork or for murals. Other members expressed mixed opinions with completely dropping the permit requirement. The matter will be discussed further at the next work session with all members of Borough Council present.

#### SANITATION ITEMS

No new items were discussed. The Borough continues to work with our consulting engineers in review of the release of a pending new NPDES permit for the treatment plant.

#### RECREATION ITEMS

Councillor Edward Huber noted that the Parks and Recreation Committee will be

meeting with Bennington Pool Services on Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup> to review pool operations, which appear to be improved over last season. The Committee will also review policies and fee schedules for the rental of the pavilion, band shell and the new kitchenette across from the pavilion.

#### PROPERTY ITEMS

The Borough Manager continues to work with Phillips and Donovan Architects and Borough Engineer Gilmore & Associates to finalize preparations of the bid documents for the Municipal Building renovation project.

CKS Engineers continues work on completing the final record plans for signature and recording, along with the development of an engineer estimate of probable cost for the required site improvements. Upon the recording of the final plan the lot can then be marketed for sale by Swartz and Company.

#### FINANCE ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that he has been in contact with Univest Bank and Trust for a commitment letter for a \$1,500,000 General Obligation Loan for the Municipal Building improvements. This loan was anticipated in the 2023 Budget. Univest expressed interest in the loan commitment, but requires submission of the audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2022 which are in process by Styer Associates. Styer Associates is working to complete the final copy of the financial statements.

Borough Manager Michael Coll provided Borough Council with the Balance Sheets and Budget Comparison Reports for the period ending June 30, 2023.

#### MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

Councillor Courtnee Wampole informed Borough Council members that she will be relocating with her family to Wyoming in August and she expects to submit her resignation from Borough Council at some point in August.

There being no further business the Borough Council work session was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary