

Borough Council Work Session

June 19, 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:

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

President Tracy Burke noted that a few residents are in attendance and he opened the floor for any public comment before beginning with the planned agenda items.

Calvin Munden, 220 Montgomery Avenue, commented on an ongoing zoning complaint involving a neighboring property at 163 S. Front Street. The property is located in a R-2 Residential zoning district but is being used as a commercial business enterprise. There are four to five commercial trucks on the property including bucket trucks and several trailers with reels of cable wire. It appears as though the Borough is allowing the continuation of this business and the property owner continues to be defiant to resident concerns and Borough ordinances.

Council President Tracy Burke responded that the Borough Manager did address the issue by sending a cease and desist order to the property owner in April, 2023. The notice provided a six month period of time for the owner to relocate the commercial business from the property with a deadline of September 30, 2023. It is likely, based on current circumstances, that this matter may be referred to court. In the interim, the Borough Manager will consult with the Solicitor and send out a second notice to again confirm the cease and desist order and expected deadline for compliance.

Jennifer Walsh, 30 W. Summit Street, and Amanda Davoli, 32 W. Summit Street, have been in discussion with Mayor Yocum about the potential to reconsider the current ordinance restrictions on the use of recreational fire pits. The current regulations effectively prohibit residents within a twin dwelling or townhome from using recreational fire pits. Perhaps consideration can be given to relaxing some of the setbacks to allow opportunities to residents living in twin dwellings to also enjoy an outside recreational fire. Borough Council will refer to the matter to the Public Safety Committee for recommendations. The Borough Manager requested that the committee consider seeking input from the Fire Marshall, Fire Chief and Police Chief since they will be called to address any civil complaints. There are smokeless recreational fire containers and propane fueled units on

the market which may serve as a potential option in more dense residential neighborhoods. The Public Safety Committee will work on a recommendation.

POLICE ITEMS

Police Chief Newhall reported that he reviewed the parking and bus movements along S. Front Street in regard to the recent concerns raised by the Souderton Charter School. He is planning to have further discussion with the Charter School to confirm the time period for the buses and also to better understand the number of buses involved. Students are being bused from a number of school districts. They will probably recommend consideration of a very specific parking restriction along S. Front Street.

Police Chief Brian Newhall further discussed his recommendation to amend the Borough's open container regulations to address Third Fridays and other potential community events that are permitted to host alcoholic beverages in public places. Chief Newhall made some revisions to his suggested formalized procedure to apply for and receive a permit specific to the sanctioned event. The permit will require insurance and other documentation. Borough Council will consider a recommendation at the July 10th Borough Council meeting to authorize the Borough Solicitor to prepare and advertise the ordinance amendment.

Councillor Matthew Sholly reported that the Public Safety Committee received letters of interest from Michael Pipe and Tammy Dagostino to serve as a member of the Police Civil Service Commission. Both candidates are in attendance at this work session. Tracy Burke asked both candidates to make a few brief remarks about their background and interest in the position. Following the presentations, Councillor Sholly, with a second from Councillor Munden, recommended that Michael Pipe be appointed to serve as a member of the Police Civil Service Commission with Tammy Dagostino appointed to serve as an alternate member of the commission. Borough Council expressed general consensus to the recommendation, which will be formally considered at the July 10th Borough Council meeting.

HIGHWAY ITEMS

Public Works Director Steven Coll provided Borough Council with a summary report of public works activities for the month. A majority of the month of June will be devoted to construction of the Freight Building plaza. Site work was completed around the new restroom building in the Community Park which was open for the June 11 Concert Sundaes event. Unfortunately we experienced difficulty with the magnetic locks on the restroom doors and had to disconnect them. Contractors have been called to service and repair the equipment.

Borough Manager Michael recommended consideration in advertising bids for an

in-place paving contract. The bid document will include specific roads in the Borough for milling and paving a new wearing surface. The contract will be in excess of \$125,000 and will require prevailing wage rates. The contract will be funded through the Liquid Fuels Budget. A recommendation will be made at the July 10, 2023 Borough Council meeting to formally consider authorization to advertise the contract for bids. The Borough Manager will assemble the bid documents for Borough Council review.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Montgomery County has just released an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is routinely updated every ten years. Specific to Souderton Borough the plan addresses weather related hazards as the most prevalent concern. Severe heavy rains, hurricanes and winter weather are the most common hazards. The full text of the Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation plan is available online from the County. Municipalities are required to adopt the plan by Resolution in order to remain eligible for emergency management agency relief. Souderton Borough did receive some emergency relief funds for two major snow storm events. In addition, our Emergency Management Plans must remain consistent with the Hazard Mitigation Plan. A motion will be recommended at the July 10, 2023 Borough Council meeting to adopt a Resolution approving and adopting the Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Fire Marshall Steven Coll recommended a change with the position of Deputy Fire Marshall and further recommended adding an Assistant Fire Marshall position. Albert Sergio, Borough resident, past fire chief and current president of the Perseverance Volunteer Fire Company, has been recommended to serve as the Deputy Fire Marshall with Donald Lynch moving to the position of Assistant Fire Marshall. A motion to approve the recommended appointments will be prepared for consideration at the July 10, 2023 Borough Council meeting.

The Borough Manager Search Committee will be accepting applications for the position of Borough Manager until June 23, 2023. The Search Committee will meet via Zoom to review the applications on Wednesday, June 28 and recommend a list of candidates for an initial first round of interviews to be held throughout the day on Wednesday, July 5, 2023. Following this round of interviews, the Search Committee will conduct a round of second interviews on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. A Special Borough Council meeting and Executive Session will be scheduled for Wednesday, July 26, 2023 to discuss Search Committee recommendations and develop terms and conditions to be incorporated within a conditional offer of employment. The Search Committee is hoping to be in a position to present a final candidate to Souderton Borough Council at the September 11, 2023 Borough Council meeting.

DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll reviewed the status of the pending subdivision plan for Gerald Peklak concerning property at W. Reliance Road and Harleysville Pike. The Planning Commission suggested a number of revisions to the plan before formal consideration.

The Planning Commission reviewed a conceptual plan for the mixed use redevelopment of property at 650 E. Broad Street. Generally the Planning Commission expressed support for the concept, however, the project appears to require dimensional variances in order to proceed. The investors are currently considering the overall feasibility of the project.

SANITATION ITEMS

Council President Tracy Burke noted a concern expressed by the owner of the Souderton Family Restaurant over a local contractor loading up their dumpster with construction debris. Their dumpster has been located within the Chestnut Street municipal parking lot by mutual agreement for several decades and has been a continual target of illegal dumping. A recommendation was made that they consider using a dumpster with locking lids. In the meantime, Souderton Police will monitor the area for illegal dumping.

RECREATION ITEMS

Borough Council discussed relative satisfaction with the operation of the swimming pool between Bennington Pool Service and Borough staff. Patrons have expressed very positive feedback with the performance of the concession stand.

Somewhat related to the efforts of the Manger Search Committee, Borough Council discussed the potential need to consider opening a Parks and Recreation Director position or consider various alternatives to add necessary staff to operate the Souderton Pool in 2024 and beyond. The parks and recreation Committee should engage in developing a recommendation over the following months.

Councillor Edward Huber noted that the Parks and Recreation Committee is reviewing 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.

Borough Council discussed and approved the submission of a letter to the Montgomery County Planning Commission declining the Montco2040 grant for the Green Parking Lot improvements to the Chestnut Street parking lot given the extremely high bid prices that were received and ultimately rejected by Borough Council. Borough Council will work with the Borough Engineer to develop a scaled down plan of improvements with a more manageable cost.

The Borough Manager will follow up with CKS Engineers on the status of 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 discussed consideration of a General Obligation Loan in the amount of at least \$1,500,000 to finance the first phase of improvements to the Souderton Municipal Building, based on current projected estimates. The next phase of renovations to the Police department are expected to be paid in large part by the federal ARPA funds. A further borrowing may be necessary to complete the final phases of renovations to the Municipal Building. Borough Council authorized the Borough Manager to contact Univest bank and Trust for a commitment letter for a \$1,500,000 General Obligation Loan. This loan was anticipated in the 2023 Budget.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

Councillor Julie Munden encouraged members of Borough Council to consider attending the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs conference. The conference is very informative. Councillor Munden also discussed plans to start up regular meetings with the Montgomery County Boroughs Association.

There being no further business the Borough Council work session was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary