

## **Borough Council Work Session Meeting**

**October 12, 2020**

A Work Session Meeting of Souderton Borough Council was called to order at 7:00 pm, on the above date, by President Brian Goshow with the following members present:

President Brian Goshow	Councillor Edward Huber
Vice-President Julie Munden	Mayor John R. Reynolds
Councillor Donna Rogers	Junior Councillor Nick Mancini
Councillor Richard Godshall	
Councillor Daniel Yocum	Borough Manager P. Michael Coll
Councillor Matthew Mscichowski	Police Chief James P. Leary
Councillor Daryl Littlefield	Public Works Director Steven Coll

Absent from this meeting was Borough Councillor Ned Leight. Access to the work session was also available through Zoom, which was coordinated through Vice-President Julie Munden.

### **PRESENTATION**

Stephen Barth and Michelle Shire of Barth Consulting Group make a presentation to Souderton Borough Council concerning a variety of potential economic development services and initiatives that they could provide to support and enhance the services of Souderton-Telford Main Streets and the Souderton Business Improvement District. The firm has completed many visioning and urban planning services for municipalities, specializing in downtown revitalization efforts. The consultants discussed potential services to Souderton Borough such as; create and update a Souderton Borough Economic Plan, review certain Zoning Ordinance initiatives, develop marketing plans, provide access to investors to consider developing projects in Souderton Borough.

### **HIGHWAY COMMITTEE**

P. K. Moyer & Sons and Borough forces will pave Wile Avenue, Hillside Avenue, and N. Fourth Street with Liquid Fuels funds. The base course was repaired along Diamond Street to clean up the street from the utility construction. Final paving will be completed in 2021. Crews are scheduled to pave Hillside Avenue and Wile Avenue this week and will move to Fourth Street and E. Chestnut Street the following week.

Borough forces will begin the streetscape project at W. Broad Street and Washington Avenue in September. The Borough crew started the installation of storm drainage along W. Broad Street. Excavation is difficult, crews have to cut through 18 inches of blacktop and concrete. Crews will install the granite curb following completion of the paving projects and installation of the storm drainage extension.

A section of sewer main collapsed in the area of West Street and Green Street which was discovered in response to a service call for a clogged sewer. The section of main appeared to be

clogged for an extended period of time. Borough forces, with assistance from P. K. Moyer, are scheduled to excavate and replaced the collapsed main this week.

## RECREATION COMMITTEE

Borough Council discussed a potential option to lease the operation of the Souderton Community Pool next season. Borough Council representatives are scheduled to meet a second time with Bennington Pool Services concerning a possible management services contract to operate the facility. The company currently operates a number of private swim clubs in the tristate area. A contact was also made with Stand Guard Aquatics, Inc. concerning interest in an operating lease. This company operates the Towamencin pool.

The Community Park Renovation Committee will be meeting on October 28<sup>th</sup>. The Borough is focused on completing the Bandshell and Pavilion renovations. The Committee has developed a final design for the monument dedicating the concert lawn area in honor of Marcus Rosenberger. We finalized plans for the steel framework to elevate the speakers and provide opportunity for digital displays. Crews will then focus on the removal of the ballfield, swing set and begin preparations for the storm drainage improvements. The 2021 Budget will include funds for the playground equipment and outdoor gymnasium which will be financed with the DCNR grant announced at the Borough Council meeting.

## POLICE COMMITTEE

Police Chief Leary distributed his monthly statistical report to Borough Council for their review. Chief Leary noted that the COVID restrictions has created a backlog with some of the annual required training. This week the department will be completing a series of required training exercises.

Councillor Julie Munden reported that the Police Chief Selection Committee will be meeting with members of Safe City on Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup> to develop a list of the top three candidates for interviews and consideration by Souderton Borough Council. Interviews will be scheduled in early November. The list of the top three candidates will be forwarded to Borough Council with further discussion at the planned October 26<sup>th</sup> work session.

## ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Borough Council discussed the proposed Souderton Business Improvement District Re-Authorization Plan. Borough Manager Michael Coll reported that notice was sent to all property owners listed in the proposed BID Re-Authorization Plan. A question was raised by representatives of the BID if the individual votes are considered as a “public record.” Borough Council concluded that it is the responsibility of the Borough to verify the legitimacy of the votes, but the identity of the voters will not be considered as public information. A vote count will be provided on a regular basis to BID representatives.

President Brian Goshaw recognized representatives of the Business Improvement

District, Margaret Zglinicki and Harry Boardman, who were in the audience, an asked them about their experience with Barth Consulting Group. The BID had several meetings with Barth Consulting, however, the BID decided to use another firm through the fourth quarter of this year. Borough Council members and the BID representatives discussed certain benefits of partnering with an economic development consulting firm.

The Communications Committee circulated a Code of Conduct for the proposed Borough Council office hours. The Committee is suggesting holding designated office hours on one Saturday of each month accessible through a Zoom format. Councillor Julie Munden noted that she will be working with the Indian Valley Chamber of Commerce on their joint municipal newsletter project which will be going out in January, 2021.

## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Borough Manager Michael Coll disused complaints from the Berkeley Court Phase 1 Homeowners Association concerning the condition of the crabapple trees planted in the front yards of the townhomes, along with some other dead or diseased trees, that were installed as part of the final land development requirements negotiated between the Borough and Blooming Glen Contractors. The initial developer defaulted on the project. The Borough Manager suggested a remedy to have the Borough remove all of the crabapple trees and other dead or diseased trees and simply restoring the lawn areas. The Homeowners Association can then determine if they wish to plant other trees or just maintain the lawn areas. After much discussion, Borough Council expressed general agreement with the proposed settlement.

Borough Manager Michael Coll provided an update on the status of the development plan review for Berkeley Court Phase 2. The Souderton Planning Commission met with the developer on October 7, 2020. The developer presented revised plans following the comments from the Borough Engineer and Montgomery County Planning Commission. The developer also spent a lot of time with the Planning Commission in reviewing initial plans for the plaza area and the park area of the development. The Planning Commission expressed a favorable opinion on the direction of the plans. Revised development plans will be reviewed again at the November 4, 2020 Planning Commission meeting. The Planning Commission meeting will be an in-person meeting and will also be available to access through Zoom.

Borough Council discussed comments made at the Borough Council meeting concerning the status of the property at 140-142 Main Street. Borough Council members will reach out to the owner to discuss intended progress on completing the development.

Borough Council reviewed the proposed extension of the Planning Assistance Agreement with the Montgomery County Planning Commission through December, 2023. Borough Council recommended approval of the agreement.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Borough Manager Michael Coll distributed the 2020 Budget comparison reports for all

funds through September 30, 2020. The Borough Manager noted that revenues continue to be favorable given the economic challenges from the COVID related restrictions. The Borough Manager further noted that the Borough received \$104,000 in Act 205 State Pension Assistance which will be forwarded to the Police Pension and Non-Uniformed Pension Plans. State Aid will fully cover the 2020 MMO requirements for each plan with an additional \$3,000 contribution towards the Non-Uniformed Pension Plan obligation. The Borough also received \$38,000 in State Relief Association funds which will be forwarded to the Souderton Volunteer Firemen's Relief Association.

Borough Manager Michael Coll recommended consideration of a \$250,000 Tax Anticipation Loan for the 2021 calendar year to help bridge available revenue through the first quarter. Uninvest Bank & trust Company is offering the loan at a fixed interest rate of 2.40%.

The Borough Manager noted that he will be working on the 2021 Budget through October. A Special Budget Work Session will be scheduled for Monday, October 26 to review the draft Budget prior to presentation at the November Borough Council meeting. Borough Council added an Executive Session to this work session for the purpose of reviewing the Police Chief candidates.

There being no further business, the work session meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Michael Coll  
Borough Secretary