

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

PUBLIC MEETING

PRESENT: Colleen Leonard, Council President
Jane Flanagan, Council Vice-President
Robert Stokley, Senior Council Member
Anita Barton, Council Member
Tina Sokolowski, Council Member
James Griffin, Council Member
Karen Tutino, Council Member
Yaniv Aronson, Mayor

ALSO PRESENT: Stephanie Cecco, Borough Manager
Michael E. Peters, Borough Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Meeting of the Conshohocken Borough Council duly advertised, was held at the Conshohocken Borough Hall, 400 Fayette Street, Conshohocken, PA. Ms. Leonard, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Leonard announced that there was an Executive Session held immediately prior to the meeting regarding a personnel matter and a property matter.

PRESENTATIONS

a.) Consider approving a Waiver of Land Development for 130 West Fifth Avenue, HOW Property Group

Mr. Peters provided an overview of the application. He explained that the applicant is proposing to convert the vacant building into a mixed use of commercial and residential space, to continue residential use of the existing residence and to install a parking area on Borough property. He stated that, per the resolution, the applicant is required to execute an easement agreement with the Borough to effectuate use of the Borough property for a parking area and associated improvements.

Mr. Stokley made a motion to approve a waiver of land development for 130 West 5th Avenue, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Proposed Plans for SEPTA Transportation Station, Melissa Cooper and Alicia Nardo, SEPTA

Melissa Cooper, Manager of Architectural Engineering for SEPTA, was present to provide an overview of the proposed plans for the Conshohocken train station. She explained that SEPTA is proposing to move the train station above Oak Street, about 500 feet from its current location. She stated that the new, 530 foot long station would be a high level platform that is fully accessible. Ms. Cooper shared that the inbound side (towards Center City) would include the new station building with a waiting area and two (2) restrooms, and open-air canopies. She explained that both inbound and outbound sides would have open-air shelters and that the new station would offer 82 parking spaces.

Ms. Cooper also presented a conceptual phase 2 (two) of the plan, which includes a parking lot with 540 parking spaces. She added that a study is being conducted to determine if a parking structure is feasible.

Ms. Tutino inquired about a walkway over the tracks. Ms. Cooper replied that a new crossing over the tracks would be installed at Oak Street and that there is no plan for a walkway over the tracks.

Ms. Barton asked about adding windscreens to the waiting areas to lessen the impact of weather on commuters. Ms. Cooper confirmed that SEPTA would consider the addition of windscreens.

Mr. Stokley requested the installation of temporary bathrooms at the current station. Ms. Cooper confirmed that SEPTA would consider the request.

Ms. Cecco inquired about the proposed timeline for the project. Ms. Cooper replied that construction is scheduled to begin in July 2019 and the conceptual phase two (2) is projected for 2021.

c.) SORA West Project, Keystone Property Group

Jennifer Wunder and Rob Gundlach, attorneys for the applicant, presented an introduction of the project. Ms. Wunder explained the differences between the project as previously recommended for preliminary approval and the current project, designed to accommodate a lead tenant. She reviewed pedestrian circulation throughout the site as well as ADA accessibility through the public areas of the property. She also discussed the accessible route from the site to the SEPTA train station, and the improvements required to effectuate that accessible route.

Ms. Wunder explained how the parking garage is designed, in terms of numbers and locations of public spaces, office-tenant spaces, emergency personnel, etc. Ms. Wunder shared concept renderings of the parking garage, which include façade screening on Fayette Street, Elm Street and West First Avenue.

Ms. Wunder stated that retail is no longer being proposed for the office building, but only the hotel. Mr. Stokley inquired about the type of retail tenant. Rich Gottlieb, the applicant, replied that he would like to see a coffee shop or convenience store in the proposed retail space.

Ms. Flanagan asked about the number of restaurants at the site. Ms. Wunder responded that there would be two (2) restaurants on site, the brewpub and the restaurant located in the hotel.

Ms. Sokolowski inquired about Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification of the office building. Mr. Rob Jaekel, the applicant's architect, provided an overview of the LEED certification process and described Keystone's role in ensuring that the building is designed to support the tenant's interior fit out design and to meet LEED certification standards.

Mr. Peters asked if it is the intention of the tenant to certify the building. Mr. Jaekel confirmed that the tenant intends to seek LEED silver certification.

d.) 100% Clean Energy Presentation

Matthew Breidenstein, Chair of the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), introduced the item. Mr. Breidenstein provided an overview of the 100% Clean Energy Initiative, a movement to transform 100% of the energy used by the Borough to renewable energy sources.

Kevin Bonenberger, Friend of the EAC, discussed the importance of clean energy. He explained that pollution and climate trends are impacting public health and safety, infrastructure environment and economic growth. He reviewed renewable energy alternatives and trends as well as the economic impact of renewable energy.

Rob Glover, Friend of the EAC, stated that the first step in committing to the initiative would be to adopt a resolution, which would establish a vision and long-term goals. He explained that the resolution would also include the drafting of an energy transition plan, which is a roadmap for achieving goals. He mentioned that the goals of the initiative are consistent with the goals of the Borough's Comprehensive Plan.

Elisa Lanzutti, member of the EAC, provided an overview of each phase of the initiative: Commit, Plan and Act.

Ms. Sokolowski requested more information about costs associated with each phase for Council's future budget and strategic planning discussions. Ms. Sokolowski and Mayor Aronson stressed the importance of continued communication with Borough Administration throughout the each phase of the process.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

a.) Consider 541 East Hector Street Zoning Hearing Board Application

Chris Stetler, Zoning Officer, provided an overview of the application. She shared that the applicant proposes to convert the office/warehouse use to 12 residential condominium units with 24 parking spaces under the building. She stated that a special exception is required to expand the building within the existing non-conformities and that variances are required to several sections of the Residential Overlay District.

Ryan Alexaki, the applicant, and his attorney, Edward Hughes, were present to answer any questions.

Mr. Stokley inquired about the number of stories. Mr. Alexaki responded that parking would be located on the ground level and that the condominium units would be on the first and second floor. He added that an additional half-story would be utilized for a roof top deck.

Ms. Sokolowski asked about the number of bedrooms per unit. Mr. Alexaki replied that the proposed plan is for two (2) bedrooms. Ms. Sokolowski stated that increasing the number of bedrooms would create a parking issue. Mr. Alexaki agreed to restrict the number of bedrooms to two (2) per unit.

Mr. Alexaki stated that the response from immediate neighbors regarding the development has been positive. He reported that one (1) resident voiced a concern about increased traffic flow and explained the vehicular circulation plan, which is to enter the site from East Elm Street and exit the site from East Hector Street.

Mr. Stokley made a motion to approve sending a letter of recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board for 541 East Hector Street conditioned upon restricting the number of bedrooms to 2, seconded by Ms. Sokolowski. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Consider approving Resolution 2018-22 creating a Parking Task Force

Ms. Cecco provided an overview of the draft resolution for the creation of a Parking Task Force. She explained that the resolution establishes procedures and requirements for appointment to the Task Force as well as establishes the duties and powers of the Task Force. She asked Council to review the draft resolution and stated that it would be on the Voting Meeting agenda for consideration in two (2) weeks.

MANAGER MATTERS

a.) Consider approving a fee waiver request, Junior Women's Club of Conshohocken

Ms. Cecco explained that the Junior Women's Club of Conshohocken is requesting a fee waiver for continued use of the Mary Wood Park House for their monthly meetings.

Ms. Flanagan made a motion to approve a fee waiver request for the Junior Women's Club of Conshohocken, seconded by Mr. Stokley. The motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Sokolowski recommended that Council consider adopting criteria and establishing procedures for fee waivers for use of Borough facilities and parks in 2019. Council agreed.

b.) Consider approving Resolution 2018-23 adopting a support animal policy for Borough property and events

Ms. Cecco provided an overview of the draft resolution, which establishes a policy for the presence of service animals, emotional support animals, and therapy animals on Borough property and Borough events. She asked Council to review the draft resolution and stated that it would be on the Voting Meeting agenda for consideration in two (2) weeks.

c.) Consider the resignation of a Planning Commission Member

Ms. Cecco stated that the Borough received notification of the resignation of Devon Boyle from the Planning Commission and thanked Devon for her service and contribution to the Commission and the Borough.

Ms. Tutino made a motion to accept the resignation of Devon Boyle from the Planning Commission, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

d.) Consider approving a modification to a land development approval condition for 385 East Hector Street

Ms. Cecco invited Karen MacNair, Borough Engineer, to the podium. Ms. MacNair explained that the Borough received a request from the applicant to change the limits of alley paving required as part of the 385 East Hector Street land development project. She stated that based on past practice and the conditions of the alley, administration and professionals support the alley being paved to the revised limits.

Ms. Barton made a motion to approve a modification of a land development condition for 385 East Hector Street, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

Ms. Cecco added an item to the agenda related to 385 East Hector Street. She stated that the Borough Engineer inspected the completed site improvements and prepared a recommended escrow release for approval by Council. She requested that Council make a motion to authorize release of 385 East Hector Street escrow in the amount of \$35,382.15.

Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to authorize release of 385 East Hector Street escrow in the amount of \$35,382.15, seconded by Mr. Stokley. The motion carried 7-0.

Mr. Peters added an additional item to the agenda, regarding a property acquisition, which was discussed in Executive Session. He shared that the property is located on West 8th Avenue, adjacent to a property already owned by the Borough and requested that Council make a motion to authorize the drafting of the agreement of sale.

Mr. Stokley made a motion to authorize the Borough Solicitor to draft an agreement of sale with the property owner of the property of parcel no. 05-00-00666-00-4, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

DEPARTMENT MATTERS

a.) Consider approving the adoption of the 2015 International Building Code

Ray Sokolowski, Director of Public Services and Building Code Official, stated that the Borough is required to adopt the 2015 International Building Code in order to be compliance with the state.

Mr. Stokley made a motion to adopt the 2015 International Building Code, seconded by Ms. Leonard. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Consider approving the attachment of AT&T Wireless Installations

Mr. Sokolowski introduced Samantha Berman with AT&T. Ms. Berman explained that AT&T engineers have identified areas in the Borough that demand more data and faster connectivity, and would like to install small cells help boost capacity. She stated that the proposal is to install a small cell on a Borough utility pole, located in front of the Great American Pub. Ms. Berman described the equipment, an antenna and an enclosure that would contain remote radio heads. She confirmed that the equipment would be designed to match the utility pole.

Ms. Cecco asked how a small cell would benefit the Borough. Ms. Berman replied that small cells provide a better mobile LTE experience and pave the way for 5G and future developments in technologies.

Mr. Stokley made a motion to approve the attachment of AT&T Wireless Installations, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

c.) Review proposed pavement markings on West 6th Avenue

Mr. Sokolowski shared that the proposal is part of a larger initiative to address resident concerns about perceived speeding and poor sight lines on West 6th Avenue. He explained that the plan is to paint lines to create lanes on the Colwell end section of West 6th Avenue, which is very broad. He stated that the painted lines would keep traffic in the center of the road which would help residents backing out of their driveways and discourage speeding.

Ms. Leonard made a recommendation to notify the residents of West 6th Avenue of the proposed plan before considering approval. Council agreed.

LEGAL MATTERS

a.) Consider approving the Request for Proposals for Police Consulting Services

Mr. Peters explained that the Borough would be seeking proposals from consulting companies to perform analyses and offer advice to the Borough with respect to the Borough's Police Department and the current search for a new Police Chief. Mr. Peters provided an overview of the scope of services outlined in the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) and asked Council to review the draft RFP over the next several weeks.

b.) Consider authorizing advertisement of the proposed amendment to Section 27-310 of the Borough Zoning Ordinance

Mr. Peters stated that FEMA has directed the Borough to amend the regulations relating to municipally-owned property to clarify that municipally-owned property is subject the requirements of Floodplain Conservation District of the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Barton made a motion to authorize advertisement of the proposed amendment to Section 27-310 of the Borough Zoning Ordinance, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

c.) Discuss a Petition to Vacate a portion of West Hector and Forrest Street

Mr. Peters explained that Keystone Property Group filed a Petition to Vacate a portion of West Hector Street and Forrest Street as part of their land development application for SORA West. He stated that Borough Administration was handling notice and advertising requirements for the Petition and that Council would consider the Petition at the October Voting Meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

a.) Sewer Authority Update (Council Member Barton)

There was no Sewer Authority update.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Julian Miraglia, 529 Fayette Street, was present to discuss an issue related to various fees charged by the Sewer Authority for development projects, particularly projects involving single-family dwellings. He stated that the Sewer Authority Board has rejected the developer's request to lower their professional services escrow and that he seeking Council's support in a resolution. Ty Borkowski and Chuck Borkowski, developers of the Borough, spoke about issues related to Sewer Authority's overall process. Ms. Sokolowski suggested that Council work with the Sewer Authority to streamline their processes.

Jim Flanigan of Flanigan's Boathouse commented about high parking demand and limited parking supply within the Borough, specifically at the lower end. Mr. Stokley responded that the Borough is in the process of establishing a Parking Task Force to identify potential locations for additional parking.

Alicia Fabriezo, representative of the Cub Scouts, asked if the Borough would advertise for the organization on the digital sign at Borough Hall. Ms. Cecco agreed.

Bobby Moore, resident, requested a meeting with Borough staff to discuss operations for the Christmas Tree Lighting at Mary Wood Park. Ms. Cecco confirmed that Borough staff is in the process of coordinating a meeting with AMBUCS in preparation for the event.

Mayor Aronson provided details regarding the EAC West Side Streets Clean Up. He reminded everyone to attend Conshohocken Beer Fest on October 13, 2018.

Mr. Stokley inquired about the dedication of the Public Meeting Room to Gerry McTamney. Ms. Cecco confirmed that the dedication is scheduled for October 17, 2018.

Ms. Sokolowski announced that there would be no trash or recycling collection on Monday, October 8, 2018. She reminded East side residents that recycling would be collected Wednesday, October 10th and trash collected Thursday, October 11th.

Acting Chief Metz thanked Bruch for hosting Coffee with a Cop. He shared at least five (5) police officers were shot in Florence, South Carolina and asked for everyone to keep the victims and their families in their thoughts.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Cecco,
Borough Secretary