

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

PUBLIC MEETING

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

ALSO PRESENT: Richard J. Manfredi, Borough Manager
Michael J. Savona, 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. Mr. James Griffin, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Council President announcements shared.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations scheduled.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a.) Consider authorizing advertising for a medical marijuana ordinance.

Mr. Manfredi introduced the item and requested that Mr. Savona elaborate on the matter. Mr. Savona shared that Council has a draft ordinance that would amend the Conshohocken zoning ordinance to create two new classes of uses that relate to the recently adopted medical marijuana act. Mr. Savona explained that one of the uses would permit a growing facility and the other would permit a medical marijuana dispensary. Mr. Savona explained that the amendment that had been prepared incorporates several of the statutory requirements of the new act as well as the Borough's recommendations and conditions. Mr. Savona shared the dispensaries were recommended to be a permitted use in the BC District and the growing facilities were recommended as conditional uses to be placed in the LI District if permitted following a hearing. Mr. Savona explained that it is timely to consider this ordinance because the Department of Health is accepting applications for licenses for these facilities between February 20th and March 20th and having an ordinance such as this in place would permit the Borough to address the matter if someone applied for either use in the future. If Council authorizes advertising the ordinance, it will go to the County Planning Commission for their review and comment, then to the Borough Planning Commission on March 9th and then back to Council for a public hearing.

Members of Council asked several questions about the ordinance language that Mr. Manfredi and Mr. Savona addressed. Mr. Manfredi and Mr. Savona explained that the matter would be before Council for their vote to authorize advertisement at the next meeting. Mr. Griffin introduced the next matter.

b.) Conduct interviews for the Comprehensive Plan Task Force:

i.) 7:00 PM – First Interview

Mr. David Bissell was the first interviewee. Ms. Sokolowski asked Mr. Bissell to tell her about himself. Mr. Bissell shared that he grew up in Bryn Mawr but resided in Conshohocken for most of the last thirteen years and that he is interested in participating on the task force as a learning experience of how government works and to get involved. Ms. Sokolowski asked if there were areas that Mr. Bissell would like the plan to address and he replied with nightlife, recreation, and that he is interested in housing because he is a landlord. Mr. Bissell shared that he believes his role would be to promote messages about the plan positively. Ms. Sokolowski asked Mr. Bissell if he had anything that he would like to share about himself and he added that he works in finance and forecasting budgeting which could be an asset.

ii.) 7:10 PM – Second Interview

Mr. Brett Neal was called next to interview. Mr. Neal shared that he is an optometrist in the Borough and that he has been in practice for three years. Mr. Neal explained that he was asked by the LoveConshy group to serve on the task force to represent their interests. Ms. Sokolowski inquired whether Mr. Neal had any special interests that he would like to see the task force address and he shared that the LoveConshy group is interested in zoning, signage, and special events in particular. Mr. Neal expressed that he would like to make the task force aware of the business community and their interest at large. Ms. Sokolowski asked if he had any other questions for the Council and he asked about the mission.

iii.) 7:20 PM – Third Interview

Ms. Melissa Sciotto was also present to interview. When asked by Ms. Sokolowski to tell Council about herself, Ms. Sciotto shared that she has been a resident of the Borough for the last fourteen years and has three children in the Colonial School District. Ms. Sciotto also explained that she had recently served as President of the Conshohocken Elementary PTO and that she is presently its Secretary. Ms. Sciotto added that she is the owner of MIXX Fitness as well. Ms. Sokolowski asked about why Ms. Sciotto was interested in serving on the task force and Ms. Sciotto explained that she is excited about the next ten years in the Borough and to be involved in planning programs for children as well as finding ways to merge changes with the Borough's traditional values. Ms. Sciotto also expressed that she is interested in seeing the plan address her two passions of working with children to offer enrichment programming for preschoolers through teens and her love of fitness by forming opportunities for collaboration between different fitness centers. Ms. Sokolowski asked how Ms. Sciotto would suggest making the public aware of the new plan and Ms. Sciotto discussed the need for education and possibly workshops. Finally, Ms. Sciotto shared that she would be a good addition to the force for several of the different roles.

iv.) 7:30 PM – Fourth Interview

Mr. Richard J. Smith II shared that he moved to Conshohocken three years ago and that he is a geologist. He shared his desire to develop roots and become involved in the community. Mr. Smith explained that he is concerned with traffic, parking, and that there seems to be too many restaurants along Fayette and that the area could use more storefront commercial establishments. To advertise for the plan, Mr. Smith suggested that the task force use social media to reach the most members of the public possible. Before concluding his interview, Mr. Smith asked questions of Council related to the level of their involvement with the task force as it progresses and Mr. Manfredi, Ms. Sokolowski, and Mr. Griffin addressed his questions.

v.) 7:40 PM – Fifth Interview

Ms. Rita Montemayor shared that she is a stay at home mom that has resided in the Borough for the last fourteen years. She also shared her involvement as President of the Conshy Elementary PTO. Ms. Sokolowski asked Ms. Montemayor what interested her about participating on the task force and Ms. Montemayor shared that she believes it is a new and interesting undertaking that would be a change from her experience in the home, with the schools, and with libraries. Ms. Montemayor added that she would be willing to learn and to do research as a member of the team. Ms. Sokolowski asked what Ms. Montemayor would like to see the task force address and Ms. Montemayor shared that she would like to

ensure that there is not too much change to the Borough that she loves. For her role in sharing the information about the new plan, Ms. Montemayor explained that she would lead by example and share the information with her neighbors, family and friends. Before concluding Ms. Montemayor's interview, Ms. Sokolowski shared information about the timeline and structure for the group.

vi.) 7:50 PM – Sixth Interview

Mr. Scott Greenly shared that he has been a resident of the Borough for two and half years but he grew up nearby in Plymouth Meeting so he has always been familiar with the municipality and has witnessed its growth. He also shared that he has a planning background and that he works in local government. Mr. Greenly is interested in participating in the task force because he believes that a Comprehensive Plan can and should be used as a tool to guide a municipality in its decision-making. Ms. Sokolowski asked if Mr. Greenly had any particular interests that he would like the plan to address and he shared that expanding the main street and walkability are two areas of his interest. To get more people involved in the plan, he shared that he had seen another task force kickoff at a microbrewery, and suggested doing something similar. Before the end of his interview, he discussed the need for the dog park to be better utilized, development being positive, and asked Council questions about the process.

vii.) 8:00 PM – Seventh Interview

Ms. Linda Myrsiades was the final interviewee that evening. She shared that she had recently retired from West Chester University and that her teaching, research, and studies had been in interdisciplinary studies. Ms. Myrsiades also discussed the various community work that she participates in, shared her ties to the Grande, and highlighted her accomplishment of negotiating with Governor Rendell on a teaching contract as Faculty Union President. Ms. Myrsiades expressed her interest in the stakeholder aspect of the task force and shared that she has a certification in mediation which could be an asset while working with the community. Ms. Sokolowski asked about the areas that Ms. Myrsiades would like to see the plan address and Ms. Myrsiades explained that she is community-oriented and that she has no criticisms to share. During the remainder of her interview, Ms. Myrsiades suggested that the Borough build more recreation along the river and inquired on the goals of the task force.

MANAGER MATTERS

Mr. Manfredi reviewed the standard matters that would be included on the next meeting agenda and explained that there would also be a public hearing on the historic overlay district and that Council would conduct the final interviews for the Comprehensive Plan Task Force as well as possibly hold interviews for the Dog Park Advisory Committee. Mr. Manfredi shared that he would ask Council for authorization to bind insurance for the next year and discussed the details of the process. Mr. Manfredi also provided updates on the Comprehensive Plan Task Force Planning Consultant proposals, the appraisal for Leeland Mansion, revisions to the Mary Wood Park Commission ordinance, and the National Citizen Survey.

Mr. Manfredi shared that the Farmer's Market had been discussed amongst Council and explained that the Borough is presently limited in how it can address such a request. Mr. Savona then explained that the Zoning Hearing Board could possibly grant a special exception for a Farmer's Market to be held in the SP District but, going forward, the Borough would need to make changes to its zoning ordinance and its vending permit procedures to allow for such an event. Council discussed the matter further and Mr. Manfredi stated that the administration would look into the vending permits and zoning ordinance further and Ms. Sokolowski agreed to discuss the land use aspect of the request with the Comprehensive Plan Task Force as well. Finally, Mr. Manfredi announced that he had received a letter regarding the Soap Box Derby that he would provide to the Mayor.

LEGAL MATTERS

Mr. Savona did not share any legal matters.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

- a.) Establish a dog friendly park (Council Member Leonard)**

Ms. Leonard shared that she requested that Council continue their discussion on the possibility of a dog friendly park because it would be great for residents. Ms. Leonard suggested that Sutcliffe be removed for consideration because of its high usage and proposed the B-Field as an option. In response, Mr. Stokley expressed that the A-Field would not be a good location. Ms. Barton suggested that Mary Wood Park be made dog friendly. Ms. Tutino suggested the Meadows on the west side and that she envisioned a true fenced in park in that location which would have to be included on the wish list for next year's budgeting. Mr. Savona commented that Mary Wood Park has no prohibition on dogs in the park in its ordinance so it could easily be made dog friendly. There was no further discussion that evening related to a dog friendly park.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Stokley asked about whether Mr. Manfredi was working on a map of development that is left in the Borough and Mr. Manfredi replied that Mr. Paul Hughes, Director of Engineering, Licenses and Inspections was. He also asked about a listing of street lights and Sergeant Michael Connor explained that a list was compiled. Mr. Raymond Sokolowski, Director of Public Services, also approached the podium and further explained the status of the Borough's LED Program. Mr. Stokley also asked Mr. Sokolowski questions about filling the potholes in the alleys.

Mr. Stokley shared that the Little League is in need of an Ansul System in the snack bar facility that they operate. He explained that the system would be placed over the grill as a fire safety measure and it is required by code for them to have one. Mr. Stokley added that a refurbished system could cost approximately \$10,000.00. Following discussion, Mr. Manfredi made a recommendation that the Borough utilize money from its contingencies in an amount not-to-exceed \$10,000.00 to purchase the Ansul System. Council gave their consent to do so.

Mr. Stokley also commented that Mr. George Gephardt would be in to discuss a speed bump with Council for his neighborhood again because one of his grandchildren was nearly hit by a car that evening.

Ms. Barton updated Council by sharing that she had spoken with Holod's and the landscaping along the Borough Hall would be installed between the beginning of March and the end of April and that the pots should arrive soon.

Ms. Sokolowski reminded everyone of the upcoming St. Patrick's Day Parade and Council devised a plan for distributing the candy during the accompanying parade.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard J. Manfredi,
Borough Secretary