

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

SPECIAL 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

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 Conshohocken Borough Hall, 400 Fayette Street, Conshohocken, Pa. Mr. James Griffin, Council President, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

WARD 5 CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

Mr. Griffin introduced Ms. Tutino who would conduct the interviews that evening. Ms. Tutino welcomed the first candidate, Ms. Rosemary Northcutt, and explained that she would ask six questions to each candidate and each interview would be allotted approximately fifteen minutes. Ms. Tutino asked Ms. Northcutt why she was wanted to serve as a Borough Council member. Ms. Northcutt replied that she has been a resident for thirty-seven years and had been involved in Conshohocken community life throughout her time; she had been to zoning and Council meetings and became interested in becoming more involved with Council following Mr. Ryan's departure. Ms. Tutino asked what Ms. Northcutt believes the role of a Council member is and Ms. Northcutt believes that it is to be a spokesperson, to provide direct services for residents and businesspeople in the Borough and to work with Council as a whole to do the same.

When asked if there was a particular issue that needs to be addressed by Council, Ms. Northcutt replied that land use and zoning needs to be addressed to provide housing variety in the Borough and open space. Ms. Northcutt shared that her top priority as a Council member is to be part of the re-invigoration of the Community Center at the Fellowship House. Ms. Northcutt hopes to continue to work on walkability in the Borough. When asked how she addresses requests made by people in her Ward, Ms. Northcutt replied that she would get as much information as possible from the resident and that, while she served as a Council member, there was a special request email address that she used to communicate with Borough staff and to follow-up with the requests so that the resident has all of the information needed. Ms. Tutino then invited other members of Council to ask questions of Ms. Northcutt and they asked her questions related to her timelines for following up on citizen requests and safety in the Borough. Ms. Tutino asked Ms. Northcutt if she had anything she would like to share regarding her expectations of her previous time serving on Council. Ms. Northcutt shared that she was proud to be a part of the Veteran's Day services in Conshohocken with the other members of Council and Mayor Frost as they paid tribute to our service people and that she learned there are many

details and processes that take place to respond to citizen requests. After thanking Council for their time, Ms. Northcutt departed and the second candidate, Ms. Jane Flanagan was seated.

Ms. Tutino welcomed Ms. Flanagan and explained the interview process to her. Ms. Tutino then asked Ms. Flanagan why she wanted to serve on Council; Ms. Flanagan replied that she was born in Conshohocken, she respects its history and future, and she was able to attend Montgomery County Community College as one of the first generation students and to open her first pre-school in Conshohocken thanks to past Borough Councils' forward-thinking; she sees that same type of thinking in the current Council and would like to be part of Conshohocken's future.

Ms. Flanagan shared that her role as a council member is to represent her ward and Borough residents and to be their voice at Council meetings. Ms. Tutino asked Ms. Flanagan what she believed the biggest issue is that needs to be addressed by Council and Ms. Flanagan replied that it is zoning; she has had personal experience with zoning procedures and understands the impact of today's zoning decisions on the future. When asked what her top priority is as a Council member, she responded that her passion is working with young children and families so she would like to assist with programs that keep young families in the Borough and that another priority of hers is traffic safety. Ms. Flanagan also stated that she would like to make quality of life decisions on Council similar to the Sewer Authority's work. When asked how she would address requests made by people in her Ward, Ms. Flanagan replied that she be available by email and cell phone for residents and that she would use common sense to try to find information for them. Mr. Griffin and Mr. Stokley asked if Ms. Flanagan was aware of the schedule of meetings for Council and the length of the term for the vacancy and she was aware of both matters. After thanking Council for their time, departed and the third candidate, Mr. Kevin McMonagle was seated.

Ms. Tutino greeted Mr. McMonagle and reviewed the procedure. Ms. Tutino asked Mr. McMonagle why he was interested in serving; he replied that he did run for election in November and he won but, due to a conflict of interest with his employer, he did not take his oath of office. He believes that he can add value to Council because of his experience as an auditor, he could assist with the budget, and he has training to analyze processes and ask the right questions. Additionally, he has a young family, which is a growing demographic in the Borough. Mr. McMonagle replied that a council member has many responsibilities such as approving the budget, enacting ordinances, to represent his ward with issues that arise, and to assist with other small and large tasks that go into making the Borough run smoothly. Ms. Tutino asked Mr. McMonagle if he had any comments related to his experience as he learned about the Borough after the election; he shared that it was very educational and that he plans to keep his ears and eyes open and to learn more as he progresses. As a Council Member, Mr. McMonagle hopes to work with parks and recreation to meet the needs of young families in the Borough. Ms. Tutino asked what his priority would be as a council member and Mr. McMonagle replied that he did not run on a specific platform so his plan was always to go into the Council and analyze what he can to make the best decision possible based on his knowledge. Mr. McMonagle would address constituent concerns in his ward by getting them to come to meetings when they have an issue and he would like to institute a resident survey to get a sense of what the residents are concerned about in the Borough.

Ms. Tutino asked if he had any comments to share with Council outside of the questions that were posed; in response, Mr. McMonagle stated that he had gotten to know the members of Council and he would still like to join them if his conflict of interest is resolved and asked if it is still their plan to support him as they attempt to fill the vacancy. Mr. Griffin replied that Council could not make that determination that evening to be fair to the other applicants. Mr. Savona commented that the conflict of interest that Mr. McMonagle had was not on the Borough's part but his employer's and the Council is obligated to fill the vacancy before the deadline to do so.

Mr. McMonagle explained the cause of the conflict of interest with his company so that all members of Council were made aware of the background. Mr. Savona reiterated that the Council is providing Mr. McMonagle the opportunity to see how the conflict plays out and that they could not make a decision whom to support outside of the context of a meeting with a motion and a resolution. There were no further comments or questions from Council or Mr. McMonagle and, with no further business to conduct, Mr. Griffin adjourned the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard J. Manfredi,
Borough Secretary