

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

PUBLIC MEETING

PRESENT: Colleen Leonard, Council President  
Tina Sokolowski, Council Vice-President  
Robert Stokley, Senior Council Member  
Anita Barton, Council Member  
Jane Flanagan, 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. Colleen Leonard, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Council President announcements.

**LAND USE MATTERS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES**

**a.) Consider granting Conditional Use approval for 826-828 Fayette Street**

Mr. Peters opened the public hearing and stated that the first public hearing on the conditional use application for 826-828 Fayette Street was held at the February 5, 2020 Council meeting. He explained that the applicant is seeking conditional use approval to expand the existing doctor's office located at 828 Fayette Street into the first and second floors of 826 Fayette Street.

**Ms. Barton made a motion to grant conditional use approval for 826-828 Fayette Street, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.**

**PRESENTATIONS**

**a.) PA State Firemen's Convention Presentation**

Jack Heleniak of Plymouth Fire Company shared that Conshohocken Fire Company No. 2 and Plymouth Fire Company have formed a joint organizing committee to pursue the goal of hosting the 2022 Firemen's Association of the State of Pennsylvania (FASP) Convention and Parade. Mr. Heleniak provided information about the history of the event and shared the committee's planning strategy for the event. He requested Council's support in their efforts to get approval from the FASP to host the convention and parade on September 21, 2022 through September 24, 2022.

**Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve Borough support for the Joint Committee of Conshohocken and Plymouth to host the 2022 State Firemen's Association Convention and Parade, seconded by Mr. Stokley. The motion carried 7-0.**

**b.) Fire Stipend Program Update, Leo Costello, Assistant Fire Chief**

Leo Costello, Assistant Fire Chief, provided a first quarter fire stipend program update. He discussed a software system which tracks membership activities and schedules duty shifts. Mr. Costello mentioned that an internal audit of the program would be completed for both fire companies at the conclusion of the first quarter.

**c.) Community Center HVAC Capital Project Presentation**

Ms. Leonard introduced Issac Kessler and Angelo Persichilli of Remington and Vernick Engineers who were present to provide an overview of the proposed improvements to the HVAC at the Community Center. Mr. Persichilli discussed the scope of work for the project, which included the installation of air conditioning and electrical upgrades to provide electrical power for new gymnasium air conditioning and portable generator docking station. He stated that the estimated construction cost is \$480,000.00. Mr. Kessler reviewed the next phases of the project and Mr. Persichilli reviewed the estimated timeline for construction.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**a.) 12 West Eighth Avenue Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Eric Johnson, Zoning Officer, provided an overview of the zoning application for 12 West Eighth Avenue. He explained that the applicant proposes to use the property for short-term rentals listed for lease on the Airbnb, Inc. short-term rental service. He presented how the subject property does not meeting the zoning requirements for a bed-and-breakfast as outlined in §27-813 of the Zoning Ordinance.

George Ozorowski, the applicant's attorney, described the proposed use of the property.

Michael Sroka, the applicant, described the present use of the property. He briefly discussed his business plan relative to property management, marketing and parking. Ms. Leonard asked if immediate homeowners were notified of the intent to rent the property for a short-term rental. Mr. Sroka replied that he has contacted neighboring business owners. Ms. Tutino inquired about the applicant's rental strategy. Mr. Sroka explained why he chose to use the property for short-term rentals instead of long-term rentals. Ms. Sokolowski asked about the impact of Airbnb on housing markets. Mr. Sroka replied that there is not enough data on the topic. Ms. Leonard asked how short-term rentals benefit the Borough. Mr. Sroka offered to work with the Borough to establish regulations and procedures for short-term rental properties. Ms. Cecco suggested that administration work with the applicant to create some conditions of approval for the Zoning Hearing Board to consider when reviewing the application. Council and the applicant agreed.

**b.) 110 and 161 Washington Street Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the zoning application for 110 and 161 Washington Street. He explained that the applicant proposes to install signage on both the 110 Washington Street (Seven Tower Bridge) and 161 Washington Street (Eight Tower Bridge) properties advertising the Seven Tower Bridge office building that is currently under construction. He explained that variances for signage relief are required.

Ross Weiss, the applicant's attorney, explained that the banner signs are needed in order to direct persons coming to the Seven Tower Bridge site because the location of the property, which is adjacent to the Schuylkill River and below the Fayette Street Bridge, creates a hardship. He stated that the proposed banner signs are temporary and would remain on the Seven Tower Bridge and Eight Tower Bridge properties no later than December 31, 2022. Mr. Weiss presented renderings of the banner signs and reviewed the placement of each sign.

**c.) Interview applicants for Board and Commission vacancies**

Ms. Leonard introduced Marc Cottingham who was present to interview for the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC). Mr. Cottingham provided an overview of his professional background as an Environmental Consultant. He discussed his environmental interest in habitat restoration and his experience volunteering with the Department of Natural Resources. He also discussed some of the initiatives of the EAC and explained how his professional experience could contribute to those initiatives.

Ms. Leonard introduced Dana MacNeal who was present to interview for the Planning Commission. Ms. MacNeal shared information about her personal and professional background as a Behavioral Therapist. She described the role of the Planning Commission and shared her experience serving as a volunteer for the Colonial School District.

Ms. Leonard introduced Alex Rigney who was present to interview for the Planning Commission. Mr. Rigney provided an overview of his professional and educational background and discussed his interest and experience in municipal planning. He discussed the Borough's Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the duties and responsibilities of the Planning Commission.

Ms. Leonard introduced Marlowe Doman, who was present to interview for the Zoning Hearing Board. Mr. Doman shared his professional background as an attorney involving housing and real estate legal matters. He discussed how the Zoning Hearing Board plays an important role in the growth and development of the community. He described his role as treasurer and legal advisor to a non-profit organization, the Doman International Institute.

**d.) Consider approving Ordinance 02-2020 amending powers and operational procedures of the EAC**

Ms. Cecco provided an overview of the proposed ordinance amendment. She asked Council to review the ordinance and consider authorizing advertisement at the March Voting Meeting.

**MANAGER MATTERS**

**a.) Consider appointing Housing Rehabilitation Program Consultants**

Ms. Cecco shared that bids for Housing Rehabilitation Program Consultants were received through an RFP process. She reviewed bid tabulations for Intake Coordinator and Environmental Consultant for the Housing Rehabilitation Program. She shared the recommendation of Chris Stetler, Community Development and Grants Coordinator, to appoint Nancy Nugent as the Intake Coordinator and D-Tech Environmental Testing as the Environmental Consultant. Ms. Cecco asked Council to review the bids and recommendation for consideration at the March Voting Meeting.

**b.) Consider approving Resolution 2020-05 stating the Borough's intent to participate in the TCDI grant program and to provide a local match**

Ms. Cecco explained that a requirement of the TCDI grant application is a resolution indicating the Borough's support of the study and contribution towards the 20% match.

**Ms. Barton made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-05 stating the Borough's intent to participate in the TCDI grant program and provide a local match, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.**

#### **DEPARTMENT MATTERS**

There were no department matters.

#### **LEGAL MATTERS**

There were no legal matters.

#### **COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS**

Mayor Aronson recognized the Conshohocken Elementary Spaghetti Dinner. He shared that a member of the Conshohocken Police Department presented at an Identity Theft Event on February 26, 2020. He announced that Yoga Home hosted QPR Gatekeeper Training for suicide prevention on March 1, 2020. Mayor Aronson also announced that Officer Perez was recognized for outstanding customer service.

Mr. Stokley inquired about the 5k route for the Police Association Conshy Classic 5k. Superintendent Metz provided the race route and confirmed that a 5k route on the east side of the Borough would be created.

Ms. Barton informed Council that the next Montgomery County Borough Association meeting is April 23, 2020.

Ms. Flanagan recognized the Read Across America Event at the Community Center. She provided event details for the Centennial Celebration at the Mary Wood Park House on November 7, 2020.

Ms. Sokolowski shared that the Friends of Conshohocken Parks plans to participate in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. She asked Council to consider approving a request to utilize funds for the purchase of a banner for the parade. She stated that the banner cost is not to exceed \$100.00. Ms. Sokolowski also shared that the Friends of Conshohocken Parks is requesting that Borough Council and the Friends of Conshohocken Parks jointly register for the parade. Council agreed that the entities should register separately.

**Ms. Barton made a motion to approve the request of the Friends of Conshohocken Parks for the purchase of a banner for a not to exceed cost of \$100.00, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Sokolowski announced that the Friends of Conshohocken Parks is hosting a Give Back Night at Snap Pizza on March 19, 2020.

Mr. Griffin inquired about candy for the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Ms. Tutino shared feedback that she received from residents regarding the proposed Maple Street parking regulations. She recommended that Council consider enacting those regulations on a temporary trial period. Council agreed. Mr. Peters confirmed that a one-year sunset clause would be added to the proposed ordinance for consideration at the March Voting Meeting. Ms. Tutino also shared that she met with members of the Grande at Riverview Condominium Association. She reported that Superintendent Metz is working to address some of the traffic related issues that were discussed at the meeting.

Superintendent Metz shared that he met with a group of seniors from St. Matthew's Church. He provided an update on surveillance and the investigation into vandalism at Sutcliffe Park.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Donald Morrison, 303 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, voiced concerns about vehicular and pedestrian safety at intersections along the railroad line.

Jim Dunlap, 300 Maple Street, discussed concerns about the proposed parking regulations on Maple Street. He explained how the 2-hour parking regulation would negatively impact the patrons of Jack Francis Catering.

Scott Langstein, 200 West Elm Street, asked if the Borough could utilize the banner sign poles once no longer used by Seven Tower Bridge and Eight Tower Bridge. He supported Council's decision to make the Maple Street parking regulations temporary and thanked Ms. Tutino for meeting with the Grande at Riverview Condominium Association.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Stephanie Cecco,  
Borough Secretary