

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

PUBLIC MEETING held via GoToMeeting video/teleconference

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 remotely using the GoToMeeting platform. Colleen Leonard, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Leonard thanked everyone for attending the virtual Council meeting. She reviewed the meeting logistics and participation instructions. She announced that Council held Executive Session prior to the regularly scheduled meeting on legal matters.

PRESENTATIONS

a.) Fire Department Annual Update: Calvin Perlman, Conshohocken Fire Company No. 2

Calvin Perlman, Lieutenant, and Leo Costello, Assistant Fire Chief, were present to provide an update on the Fire Department. Mr. Costello reviewed current membership and discussed challenges and initiatives for recruitment and retention. He provided an overview of the fire stipend program for 2020. Mr. Costello also provided an overview of the department, including the command structure and administrative officers.

Mr. Perlman provided an update on overall emergency operations, including mutual aid, water rescue, equipment and vehicles, and training. He discussed the Fire Department's response to COVID-19. Mr. Perlman reviewed 2020 expenses and projected capital expenses.

b.) Covanta Plymouth Progress Update: David Sharp, Director of Area Asset Management

David Sharp, Director of Area Asset Management for Covanta Plymouth, was present to provide a progress update on facility operation improvements. Mr. Sharp reviewed the mitigation efforts that have been made to prevent any major plant events, including the relocation of the cable tray and various other electrical system improvements and upgrades. He explained that further efforts are now focused on extinguishing waste in the boilers safely and promptly in the event of a total power loss at the facility. He discussed in detail two (2) fire suppression products that the plant is considering. Mr. Sharp shared that recent improvements have been made to increase communication and provide more timely responses to concerns by establishing a community hotline and posting continuous emissions monitoring data online.

Ms. Sokolowski inquired about Covanta Plymouth's long-term strategic plan and capital investment into the facility. She requested that Covanta provide updates to Council if Covanta were to deviate from capital expenditures that are required to upkeep plant operations. Mr. Sharp responded that he would provide Ms. Cecco with an answer following the meeting.

Ms. Barton asked how often a baghouse is replaced. Mr. Sharp responded that baghouse bags are replaced every three (3) years and monitored regularly.

Mr. Sharp confirmed that the DEP Consent Assessment of Civil Penalty focused on corrective measures to resolve compliance issues associated with the 2019 and 2020 plant events and not the repeal of Covanta's operating permit.

Ms. Sokolowski asked if Covanta has ever had an operating permit revoked at any Covanta facility. Mr. Sharp responded that he would provide Ms. Cecco with an answer following the meeting.

Ms. Cecco shared that Borough Council would consider approving an extension to the current Solid Waste Disposal Agreement with Covanta at the February Voting Meeting.

LAND USE MATTERS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

a.) Discussion on an amendment to the Accessory Structure section of the Zoning Ordinance

Mr. Peters shared that the existing maximum size of accessory structures has been identified as an impediment to the construction of a functional two (2) car garage. He explained that the proposed

ordinance amendment aims to correct that by increasing the maximum permitted size of accessory structures from 350 square feet to 450 square feet, but only if the accessory structure is used solely as a garage for parking vehicles. Mr. Peters discussed the concept of deed restrictions, which would limit the use of garages to the parking of vehicles. Ms. Sokolowski asked if the additional 100 feet of parking garage could be exempt from being counted as impervious surface. Eric Johnson, Zoning Officer, confirmed that there is a provision in the Borough Zoning Ordinance that allows off-street parking spaces to be exempt from impervious coverage. Mr. Peters confirmed that setback requirements would remain the same.

b.) Discussion on the Wireless Communications Facilities section of the Zoning Ordinance

Mr. Peters shared that the Borough must amend its current wireless communication facilities regulations to include more expansive regulations that address the growth of and focus on 5G technology. He provided an overview of the Borough's current ordinance and discussed adding provisions relative to Small Cell Wireless Communication Facilities in the Borough. Borough Council agreed that the regulations must be updated. Mr. Peters responded that Administration would work on creating a draft zoning ordinance amendment for review by Borough Council.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

a.) Conduct an interview for appointment to the Dog Park Advisory Committee

Ms. Leonard introduced Hally Ammons who was present to interview for a vacancy on the Dog Park Advisory Committee. Ms. Ammons shared that she is invested in maintaining a high quality of life for the residents of the Borough by helping to maintain and improve the Borough's parks. She discussed her various roles in several community organizations including the Conshohocken Elementary PTO. Ms. Ammons shared that she hopes that her enthusiasm for the Borough's park system will help to raise awareness of the Dog Park and the initiatives of the Committee.

MANAGER MATTERS

a.) Consider approving 203 East Twelfth Avenue financial security escrow release no. 1 for demolition in the amount of \$21,535.00

Ms. Cecco stated that the Borough Engineer completed site inspection and prepared escrow release recommendations for items a.), b.), and c.) under Manager Matters.

Ms. Flanagan made a motion to approve 203 East Twelfth Avenue financial security escrow release no. 1 for demolition in the amount of \$21,535.00, seconded by Ms. Sokolowski. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Consider approving 130 West Fifth Avenue financial security escrow release no. 1 in the amount of \$76,300.65

Mr. Griffin made a motion to approve 130 West Fifth Avenue financial security escrow release no. 1 in the amount of \$76,300.65, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

c.) Consider approving the fifth and final financial security escrow release for 204 East Eighth Avenue in the amount of \$19,515.45

Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve the fifth and final financial security escrow release for 204 East Eighth Avenue in the amount of \$19,515.45, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

d.) Consider approving Resolution 2021-02 authorizing the submission of the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Application

Ms. Cecco shared that the Borough is interested in obtaining a grant of \$100,000.00 from the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Program to provide funding for the purchase and installation of an outdoor fitness court at Sutcliffe Park. She explained that matching funds and a grant from the National Fitness Campaign would also be utilized to fund the project. Ms. Cecco asked Council to consider approving a resolution authorizing the submission of the grant application.

Ms. Barton made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-02 authorizing the submission of the Montco 2040 Implementation Grant Application, seconded by Mr. Stokley. The motion carried 7-0.

e.) Consider approving a tuition reimbursement for Officer Bahn for the 2021 Spring Semester

Ms. Cecco stated education reimbursement is a budgeted item per the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve a tuition reimbursement for Officer Bahn for the 2021 Spring Semester, seconded by Ms. Tutino. The motion carried 7-0.

f.) Consider approving Resolution 2021-03 extending the suspension of the license, application and fee requirements of the sidewalk dining license requirements

Ms. Cecco stated that the Borough suspended the license, application and fee requirements of the sidewalk dining license requirements for 2020 in order to assist the Borough's restaurants in providing services in a

safe manner during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Cecco asked Council to consider extending the suspension of certain provisions of the sidewalk dining license requirements for 2021.

Ms. Tutino made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-03 extending the suspension of the license, application and fee requirements of the sidewalk dining license requirements through December 31, 2021, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

g.) Consider approving the suspension of the renewal process for Special Dedicated Parking Program for 2021

Ms. Cecco stated that participants of the Special Dedicated Parking Program are required to renew their permit on an annual basis with the submission of a certification from a medical professional. She explained that the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for program participants to obtain the required certification. She asked Council to consider suspending the renewal process for 2021. Ms. Cecco confirmed that the exemption would apply to existing program participants only and that new applicants would be required to obtain documentation from a medical professional.

Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve the suspension of the renewal process for Special Dedicated Parking Program for 2021, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

DEPARTMENT MATTERS

There were no department matters.

LEGAL MATTERS

There were no legal matters.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

a.) Friends of Conshohocken Parks Update: Funding effort for zip line at Sutcliffe Park and t-shirt fundraiser request (Vice President Sokolowski)

Ms. Sokolowski provided an update on the fundraising efforts of the Friends of Conshohocken Parks. She shared that the Friends of Conshohocken Parks would like to raise money for the purchase and installation of a zip line at Sutcliffe Park. She also shared that the Friends of Conshohocken Parks are continuing to sell t-shirts as part of their campaign to raise awareness and money for the non-profit organization. Ms. Sokolowski asked for Council's approval to sell the t-shirts in businesses in the Borough.

Ms. Tutino made a motion to approve the Friends of Conshohocken Parks funding effort to raise money for a zip line at Sutcliffe Park and to approve the request of the Friends of Conshohocken Parks to sell t-shirts in business in the Borough, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Aronson shared that West Conshohocken held a memorial for the 50th anniversary of the gas leak explosion. He also shared that Destination Conshohocken hosted a virtual bingo with Guppy's Good Times to support the Conshy Strong initiative. He shared a poster from a member of Girl Scout Troop 7044 to remind everyone that Girl Scout cookies are available for purchase.

Ms. Barton thanked Public Services for their hard work with the snow removal.

Ms. Flanagan recognized Public Services for their hard work with the snow removal.

Ms. Tutino voiced her appreciation for Public Service's hard work with the snow removal.

Mr. Stokley inquired about how the Borough is assisting residents with questions regarding the vaccination process. Ms. Cecco shared that vaccination information can be found on the Borough website and welcomed residents with questions to call the Borough Administrative Office.

Superintendent Metz acknowledged the Conshohocken SWAT team members who were present at the barricade incident in Plymouth Township on January 13, 2021. He recognized all police personnel involved for bringing the incident to a peaceful resolution.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brittany Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, stated that one (1) individual submitted written public comment via email submission.

Derek Gould, East 8th Avenue, voiced concerns about the Covanta facility. He inquired about mitigation efforts that the plant has made to prevent major malfunctions in the future. He requested that Covanta partner with Tower Health in Conshohocken to fund wellness visits for residents who have been adversely affected.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Cecco,
Borough Secretary