

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, April 7, 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 7:02 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.) Consider approving Proclamation 2021-01 designating April as Pennsylvania Safe Digging Month**

Ms. Cecco shared that Safe Digging Month is an awareness initiative sponsored by Pennsylvania 811 for the month of April. She explained that Pennsylvania 811 Safe Digging Month serves as a reminder to all excavators and homeowners to call 811 at least three business days before you dig to prevent injuries, property damage and utility outages.

**Mr. Griffin made a motion to approve Proclamation 2021-01 designating April as Pennsylvania Safe Digging Month, seconded by Mr. Stokley. The motion carried 7-0.**

**b.) Traffic Initiatives Update Presentation: Brian Keaveney, Traffic Engineer**

Brian Keaveney, Borough Traffic Engineer, was present to provide an update on traffic initiatives.

Mr. Keaveney discussed the Fayette Street crosswalk project, which provides for the installation of overhead rapid flashing beacons, high visibility crosswalk markings and associated signage at the intersections of Fourth and Seventh Avenues. He stated that the Borough received grant funding from PennDOT for the project and that a Request for Bids (RFB) would be issued within the next six (6) weeks. Ms. Sokolowski recommended highlighting this project as a way to promote pedestrian safety. Mayor Aronson confirmed that he could work with the Police Department and Ms. Flanagan recommended utilizing the Borough newsletter to promote pedestrian safety and the crosswalk project.

Mr. Keaveney provided an update on the Fayette Street Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program. He stated that this joint project, between PennDOT and the Borough, improves signal system throughout the Borough by installing three (3) fully modernized intersections at Third, Ninth and Eleventh Avenues. Mr. Keaveney explained that the adaptive signal equipment, which will vary the green time based on traffic volume, is expected to go live within the next two (2) weeks. Ms. Barton asked why ADA push buttons were not installed at Fayette and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Keaveney responded that upgrades at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue were limited to controller assembly as part of the original scope of the project. He added that additional upgrades would be installed when PennDOT takes ownership of the signals on Fayette Street during the second phase of the program. Mayor Aronson asked if the program includes upgrades at Front Street in West Conshohocken. Mr. Keaveney confirmed signal modernizations at those intersections.

He shared that the intersection of Fayette and Elm was modified to provide a double left turn lane from Fayette Street. Ms. Leonard commented that the two (2) lanes merge into one (1) lane pretty quickly after the intersection. Mr. Keaveney responded that the double lanes would eventually carry all the way to Oak Street once construction at the corner is complete. He added that the dual lanes were operating at a satisfactory level at the time of inspection and that further inspection could be conducted.

Mr. Keaveney introduced a type of traffic calming known as road diet, which reconfigures the existing roadway from the current four (4) lane configuration to one (1) through lane in each direction, a center shared left-turn lane and/or median areas, and additional shoulder area on either side of the roadway. He explained that a road diet improves safety for vehicular traffic by eliminating the variations in travel speed, minimizing turning conflicts and reducing traffic patterns. He also explained how a road diet improves

safety for pedestrians through reduced vehicular speeds, improved sight distance, and potentially shorter crossings.

Ms. Barton asked where the road diet would be implemented along Fayette Street. Mr. Keaveney responded that the road diet could be effectively implemented at Third Avenue through Eleventh Avenue.

Ms. Flanagan commented that added congestion during peak hours might divert drivers to the residential side streets. Mr. Keaveney responded that the recently installed modernized signal system would greatly enhance the efficiency of Fayette Street. He confirmed that those types of traffic patterns would be included in any further study.

Mayor Aronson inquired about the performance of road diets in other municipalities. Mr. Keaveney reported that case studies have shown crash reductions and no detrimental impacts from diverting traffic as long as reasonable traffic flow rate is maintained. He stated that he anticipates that the road diet on Fayette would be able to carry a significant volume of traffic while slowing the average speed.

Ms. Sokolowski shared that there is a perception that reducing lanes on Fayette Street will reduce capacity of the roadway. Mr. Keaveney responded that the road diet could lead to more congestion during peak hours at the signalized intersection. He stated that a study must be conducted to determine if a reduced lane configuration is feasible along Fayette Street. He added that since Fayette is a state owned roadway, any potential modification would require PennDOT concurrence and approval.

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

### **a.) 51 Washington Street Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Eric Johnson, Zoning Officer, introduced the zoning application for 51 Washington Street which seeks variances to permit the installation of three (3) wall mounted signs and four (4) incidental signs on the building front door glass.

Matt McHugh, the applicant's attorney, shared renderings of the proposed signage. Mr. McHugh explained that the proposed signage is reasonable and necessary to adequately identify the apartment building to passing motorists and entering pedestrians and also consistent with the façade features of the building.

Ms. Barton inquired about the illumination of the signs. Mr. McHugh responded that the proposed signs are LED face lit channel letters.

### **b.) Discussion on an amendment to the Parking and Snow Route section of the Borough Ordinance**

Ms. Cecco reviewed the proposed ordinance which would amend the Borough's Vehicle and Traffic Regulations by adding an additional stop intersection on East Elm Street at Jones Street, by adding certain no parking areas on East Eighth Avenue and West Fifth Avenue, by creating a patient-only parking zone during certain hours in an area of East Eleventh Avenue, and by creating new snow emergency routes on portions of East First Avenue and West First Avenue. Council had no concerns with the proposed amendments.

## **COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **a.) Discussion on Conshohocken Bears Use of Borough Facilities**

Ms. Cecco shared that over the course of 2020, the Borough received numerous complaints and concerns from residents surrounding the A-field and B-field pertaining to the Conshohocken Bears organization. She stated that complaints ranged from noise complaints to fights that required a police presence. Therefore, there needs to be a change in the relationship between the Borough and the Bears. She explained that Borough Administration is recommending that the Bears organization be permitted to continue utilizing the A-Field and B-Field for the 2021 season under specific terms. Ms. Cecco read the proposed list of conditions. She explained that the conditions would be formalized in a use agreement between the Borough and the Bears organization. She discussed the termination clause, which provides for immediate termination upon the first violation of any of the conditions. She also discussed the process for determining if a violation occurred. She noted that the Borough has received confirmation from the President of the Conshohocken Bears that the Board met and voted to accept and adhere to all conditions proposed, including the one-strike policy.

Ms. Sokolowski asked who would be making the determination that a violation has occurred and inquired about acceptable forms of proof of violation. Mr. Peters responded that Administration would most likely be determining if a violation occurred. He confirmed that a video and a police report are acceptable forms of proof of violation.

Ms. Leonard inquired about the usage of A-Field and B-Field by other organizations. Lauren Irizarry, Director of Recreation Services, reviewed field usage and confirmed that there have been no issues with any other organization.

Ms. Cecco asked Council to consider approving a use agreement with the Conshohocken Golden Bears for the 2021 season at the Voting Meeting in April.

## **MANAGER MATTERS**

### **a.) Consider awarding a bid for the purchase of PPE Coveralls through the Assistance to the Firefighters Grant**

Ms. Cecco shared that the Borough received a FEMA Grant for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for members of both fire companies. She stated that an RFB for the procurement of PPE Coveralls was distributed and fourteen (14) bids were received. Ms. Cecco reviewed the bid tabulation. She recommended that Borough Council consider awarding the supply of 2,500 protective coverall suits to Contract Cleaners at the price bid plus reasonable shipping costs. Ms. Sokolowski requested that the Borough obtain a sample of the coverall and have one of our emergency responders test the sample to make sure the coverall is sufficient prior to purchasing.

**Ms. Tutino made a motion to award a bid for the purchase of PPE Coveralls through the Assistance to the Firefighters Grant contingent upon acceptance of the coverall sample by Borough first responders, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.**

**b.) Consider approving 7 Tower Bridge financial security escrow release no. 1 in the amount of \$344,925.00**

Ms. Cecco stated that the Borough Engineer has reviewed the request and provided an escrow release recommendation for Council's consideration.

**Ms. Barton made a motion to approve 7 Tower Bridge financial security escrow release no. 1 in the amount of \$344,925.00, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.**

**c.) Consider accepting the resignation of a Dog Park Advisory Committee member**

Ms. Cecco shared that MacKenzie Breinlinger, Vice-Chair of the Dog Park Advisory Committee, is moving out of the Borough and therefore, can no longer serve on the Committee.

**Ms. Flanagan made a motion to approve the resignation of MacKenzie Breinlinger from the Dog Park Advisory Committee, seconded by Ms. Sokolowski. The motion carried 7-0.**

#### DEPARTMENT MATTERS

There were no department matters.

#### LEGAL MATTERS

**a.) Discussion on AmerisourceBergen RACP Granted-related Agreements**

Mr. Peters shared that the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County (RDA) received a grant pursuant to the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) in the amount of 2 million dollars for the SORA West development and more specifically for development of the parking garage structure. Mr. Peters discussed each of the grant related documents and asked Council to review each document over the next two (2) weeks in preparation for consideration of approval at the April Voting Meeting.

#### COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

**a.) Bells Across Pennsylvania (Mayor Aronson)**

Mayor Aronson announced that second annual celebration of "Bells Across Pennsylvania" would take place on Sunday, May 2, 2021. He shared that at 7:00pm on May 2nd individuals with hand bells, churches and public buildings with bells, and other noisemakers will ring out for three minutes in a solid chorus of statewide support for the frontline workers in Pennsylvania. He asked that the event be advertised on Borough social media outlets and that the Fire Companies ring their sirens in participation. He also asked that Council approve a proclamation supporting the participation in Bells Across Pennsylvania.

**a. Consider approving Proclamation 2021-02 supporting participation in Bells Across Pennsylvania**

**Ms. Barton made a motion to approve Proclamation 2021-02 supporting participation in Bells Across Pennsylvania, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.**

Ms. Barton commented that she has noticed an increase in dog-related incidents. She urged dog owners and the public to take extra care when encountering dogs.

Superintendent Metz shared that Detective William Walter has been selected by the Montgomery County District Attorney to work on a newly formed County task force focused on human trafficking.

Mayor Aronson reminded everyone that the EAC Spring Community Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, April 10, 2021. He recognized the Department of Recreation for the success of the Bunny Hop Thru event. He shared information about a suicide prevention training scheduled for April 18, 2021. Mayor Aronson announced that the Lucky Dog Gastropub has reopened.

Ms. Sokolowski shared that the Conshohocken Free Library has installed pop-up poetry stations throughout the Borough to celebrate National Poetry Month. She encouraged everyone to check it out.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Brittany Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, stated that there was no written public comment.

Kerry McMahon, Whitmarsh resident, had several questions related to the Conshohocken Golden Bears. She inquired about undercover police presence on the fields and acceptable forms and ways to provide proof of violation. She requested that no littering and no street parking on 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue be added to the list of conditions for the Bears. She inquired about the Borough's field usage policy for organizations outside of the Borough. Ms. Cecco responded that she would contact Ms. McMahon following the meeting to answer her questions.

Jim Cipar, 114 E 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, spoke about the conduct of the Conshohocken Bears. He reported incidents of trespassing and public urination. He recommended requiring the Bears to provide additional portable restrooms. He asked how the Borough plans to monitor and supervise the organization's use of the fields. Mr. Cipar reported that a parent of a Conshohocken Golden Bears player hit his car.

Ana DeSantis, 200 West Elm Street, commented that the terms of the use agreement with Conshohocken Bears is too strict. She discussed the proposed parking ordinance amendment and urged Administration to thoroughly vet the requests for no parking signs.

Cindy Cipar, 114 E 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, asked if the Conshohocken Police Department would respond when an incident concerning the Conshohocken Bears is reported. Superintendent Metz responded that the Conshohocken Police Department responds to calls for service for incidents that occur within the jurisdiction of the Borough of Conshohocken.

Mark Benjamin, President of the Conshohocken Golden Bears, acknowledged that changes within the Conshohocken Bears organization need to be made. He discussed the positive working relationship between the Bears organization and Borough Administration. He encouraged concerned residents to reach out to him directly.

Sean Purcell, 226 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, shared that he is concerned that the road diet could lead to even more congestion during peak hours.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Stephanie Cecco,  
Borough Secretary.