

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, June 2, 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 7:05 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.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

a.) Conduct an interview for the Vacancy Board

Ms. Leonard introduced Holly Holst who was present to interview for the Vacancy Board. Ms. Holst shared that she currently serves on the Friends of Conshohocken Parks and the Conshohocken Elementary PTO and is an active member of St. Marks Lutheran Church. She discussed the importance of the Vacancy Board as it ensures that Borough business can continue without delay in the event of a vacancy on Borough Council. Ms. Holst acknowledged that the position is non-partisan and discussed her approach at decision-making.

LAND USE MATTERS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

a.) Consider granting conditional use approval for 261-263 East Elm Street

Mr. Peters opened the public hearing for the continued hearing for the conditional use application for 261-263 Elm Street. Mr. Peters stated that the applicant is seeking approval to permit a modern multifamily housing development in the Limited Industrial Zoning District pursuant to the provisions of the Residential Overlay District and to permit a building height greater than 35 feet. He reminded Council that the relief for building height is being requested to accommodate scissors lifts underneath the building to provide additional parking. He reviewed the proposed conditions of approval.

Ms. Leonard made a motion to grant conditional use for 261-263 East Elm Street pursuant to Zoning Ordinance 27-1902-B and 27-1903-B.11 to permit a modern multifamily housing development as presented by Borough Council with a height of 45 feet (on the Elm Street façade) subject to nine (9) conditions of approval, seconded by Ms. Sokolowski. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Discussion on adopting a nuisance ordinance relative to animal control

Ms. Cecco shared that Administration has received complaints regarding feral cats in the Borough. She explained that residents have health and safety concerns regarding neighbors feeding stray cats and have requested that Borough Council consider an ordinance that would regulate feral cats. Ms. Cecco reviewed similar ordinances in place in neighboring municipalities. She discussed the concept of hiring an animal control officer and allowing residents to commence civil action to enforce the provisions of the ordinance.

Members of Borough Council and Mayor Aronson discussed feedback that they have received from residents on the topic. Mayor Aronson reported that residents are personally hiring animal control professionals to address the issue. Ms. Flanagan stated that controlling the situation should not be a burden on the residents. Ms. Sokolowski acknowledged that establishing rules and regulations relative to animal control is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents. Ms. Barton asked that Administration look into regulations that would prohibit animals from running at large. Mayor Aronson requested including provisions related to the keeping of roosters in the ordinance. Ms. Leonard stressed the importance creating provisions for effective enforcement.

Council authorized Administration to continue working on amending the Borough Ordinance to establish additional rules and regulations relative to animal control.

PRESENTATIONS

a.) MS4 Presentation, Karen MacNair, Borough Engineer

Karen MacNair, Borough Engineer, was present to provide an update on the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). Ms. MacNair stated that the MS4 permit authorizes the Borough to discharge stormwater to the Plymouth Creek and Schuylkill River. She discussed the permit requirements, which include the reduction of discharge of pollutants and the removal of hazardous connections. She reviewed the six (6) Minimum Control Measures that the Borough must implement in order to meet the requirements of the permit.

Ms. MacNair explained that the Borough is also required to implement a Pollutant Reduction Plan to reduce sediment carried in stormwater within the Plymouth Creek watershed by ten percent. She confirmed that the Borough's Pollutant Reduction Plan, to construct an underground basin at Sutcliffe Park, has been approved by PennDOT.

MANAGER MATTERS

a.) Consider approving Resolution 2021-10 approving an extension of temporary parking regulations within the Borough

Ms. Cecco explained that Borough established temporary "No Parking" areas on the East side of Fayette Street between East First Avenue and East Second Avenue to support our restaurants with takeout and outdoor dining options during the pandemic. With those temporary no parking regulations set to expire, Ms. Cecco requested that Council consider approving an extension of the no parking regulations for a period of 90 days. She shared that the Parking Task Force would evaluate the temporary regulations and make a recommendation to Council for future regulations.

Ms. Barton made a motion to approve Resolution 2021-10 extending temporary parking regulations within the Borough, seconded by Mr. Stokley. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Consider approving the second and final security escrow release for 130 West Fifth Avenue in the amount of \$17,615.70

Ms. Cecco shared that the Borough Engineer completed a final site inspection and prepared an escrow release recommendation for approval by Borough Council. Ms. Cecco stated that the release is contingent upon receipt of the 18-month maintenance bond.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to approve the second and final security escrow release for 130 West Fifth Avenue in the amount of \$17,615.70, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

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

Ms. Cecco stated that the Borough received the resignation of Georgina Weber from the Dog Park Advisory Committee.

Ms. Tutino made a motion to accept the resignation of Georgina Weber from the Dog Park Advisory Committee, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

d.) Consider approving SORA West Parking Garage signage that extends into the Right-of-Way

Ms. Cecco shared that the SORA West project submitted a building permit application for ground level parking garage signage. She explained that some of the proposed signs were located within the ultimate right-of-way of the abutting streets, which is not permitted unless approved by Borough Council.

Ms. Flanagan made a motion to approve SORA West Parking Garage signage that extends into the Right-of-Way, seconded by Ms. Barton. Mr. Stokley recused himself. The motion carried 6-0.

e.) Discussion on Hometown Heroes Banner Program

Ms. Cecco shared that Administration received a request from the Hometown Heroes Banner Program and VFW Post 1074 to bring the banner program to Conshohocken on Fayette Street. She stated that the banner program is a living tribute to recognize and honor veterans who are serving or who have served in the armed forces. She explained that the Hometown Heroes organization, in conjunction with the VFW, would handle the administrative duties and the production and delivery of the banners and that the Borough would be responsible for hanging and storing the banners. She reviewed costs associated with program, which included specialized brackets for the banners and fees for a bucket truck to install and remove the banners. Ms. Cecco identified a scheduling conflict with hanging the banners on Fayette Street.

Walt Harnett of the VFW asked Council to consider launching a pilot program for 2021 to be limited to outside of the VFW. Borough Council supported the idea of a pilot program for 2021 and asked Ms. Cecco work with the Hometown Heroes and the VFW on a 2022/2023 cycle to be highlighted at different locations other than Fayette Street.

DEPARTMENT MATTERS

There were no department matters.

LEGAL MATTERS

There were no legal matters.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

Mayor Aronson recognized the success of the Flag Planting event at Calvary cemetery and the VFW Memorial Day Services. He reminded everyone that the Arts Festival and Car Show is on June 5, 2021.

Mr. Stokley shared that an auction is scheduled for a property on Maple Street, which includes a vacant parcel that runs to the edge of Sutcliffe Park. He asked if the Borough would consider purchasing the property for open space. Ms. Cecco responded that Administration has a meeting scheduled with the property owner and will follow-up with Council.

Ms. Flanagan recognized Mayor Aronson and his Committee for all their hard work with the Arts Festival and Car Show.

Ms. Sokolowski shared that the Friends of Conshohocken Parks will have a gift basket raffle at the Arts Festival and Car Show to raise money for a zip line at Sutcliffe Park. Mr. Stokley offered to donate \$500.00 to the Friends of Conshohocken Parks for the zip line.

Ms. Leonard recognized Lauren Irizarry, Director of Recreation Services, for the success of the Senior Barbeque.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brittany Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, stated that four (4) individuals submitted written public comment. Ms. Rogers read the comments.

Erik Stalford, 350 West Elm Street, stated that he is in full support of an ordinance to control the stray cat problem in Conshohocken. He reported seeing 10-15 cats around Haines and Salvati Park being fed by a neighbor.

Sam Nagle, 350 West Elm Street, stated that he observed a neighbor feeding approximately 15-20 cats at Haines and Salvati Park. He asked Council for their support to regulate the feeding of stray cats.

Katie Kirlin, 331 Spring Mill Avenue, discussed the potential health related issues associated with feral cats. She asked Council for their support to regulate the feeding of stray cats.

Dennis Hannan, 448 West 6th Avenue, reported a neighbor who throws food on the sidewalk when he is walking his dog.

Seth Piechowski, 335 Spring Mill Avenue, discussed how feeding stray cats contributes to the challenge of increased feral cat populations. He also discussed health related issues and property damage associated with feral cats.

Walt Hartnett with the VFW Post 1074 reported an incident with a neighbor related to music during events at the VFW. Ms. Cecco responded that the Police Department purchased a decibel meter and will be monitoring the VFW to ensure that the noise level is in compliance with the noise ordinance.

Scott Langstein, 200 West Elm Street, commented that the double left turn lane from Fayette Street on to West Elm Street merges into one (1) lane pretty quickly after the intersection.

Sean Purcell, 226 East 5th Avenue, acknowledged that rules and regulations relative to feral cats must be established in order to control the issue. He questioned why Borough Council continues to approve major residential developments that would only add to Conshohocken's traffic problems.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Cecco,
Borough Secretary