

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

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.

**PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

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

**a.) Public Hearing on a Waiver of Off-Street Parking, 319 Forrest Street**

Eric Johnson, Zoning Officer, provided an overview of the site, which includes a garage with office space and residential units on the second floor. He explained that there is a new tenant seeking to retrofit/customize van interiors within the first floor garage. He commented that the proposed use is of the same general character as the permitted uses in the Business Commercial (BC) Zoning District. Mr. Johnson added that there is currently no off-street parking and no ability to add off-street parking to the site.

The property owner, Thomas Gravinese, was present to answer any questions. Mr. Gravinese provided an overview of scope of services to be provided by the new tenant. Ms. Flanagan asked if any welding would be performed on site. Mr. Gravinese replied that he is unaware of any welding that would occur with van customizations. Mr. Gravinese discussed business operations, including staffing requirements and average number of vehicles serviced on site.

**b.) 340 East Seventh Avenue Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the site, which includes a single-family dwelling. He stated that the applicant is proposing to construct a retaining wall extending along the eastern side of the property between the dwelling and detached garage. He explained that a variance is required to allow the retaining wall to be located within the Jones Street legal right-of-way.

Matthew O'Hanlon, the property owner, explained how a retaining wall would create more usable, safe space on property for his children. He also explained that a retaining wall would stabilize the slope of the backyard. He mentioned that the proposal is consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Barton asked for clarification on the location of the retaining wall. Mr. Johnson replied that the proposed 3.5-foot high retaining wall would encroach 3.2 feet into the legal right-of-way. He stated that the proposed wall would run along the outside edge of the sidewalk. Mr. Johnson provided the definition of right-of-way.

**c.) 1023 Fayette Street Zoning Hearing Board Application**

Mr. Johnson shared that the applicant is seeking a variance to allow eight (8) off-street parking spaces whereas eighteen (18) paces are required for the proposed office and retail space that will occupy the building when redevelopment of the site is complete.

Andrew Slom, the applicant's attorney, explained that the retail space would be used solely as a showroom for the applicant's lighting company, which traditionally has very low foot-traffic. He added that less than 10% of the business is retail sales.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**a.) Conduct interviews for Board and Commission vacancies**

Ms. Leonard introduced Alan Chmielewski who was present to interview for the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB). Mr. Chmielewski shared that he is looking to contribute to the community. He discussed his professional experience in the commercial construction industry, his ability to interpret state and local ordinances and his understanding of floor plans. Mr. Chmielewski discussed the role of the ZHB and explained that, if appointed, he plans to learn from his fellow board members and the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Leonard introduced Kurtis Miller who was present to interview for the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) and Zoning Hearing Board. With regard to the EAC, Mr. Miller discussed the importance of utilizing the Borough's green-space and recreational facilities, promoting low maintenance lawn care practices and providing instruction on proper landscaping care. With regard to the ZHB, Mr. Miller explained that the role of the ZHB is to ensure the fair and equitable application of the Zoning Ordinance while considering the concerns of residents.

Ms. Leonard introduced Jessica Sullivan who was present to interview for the Mary Wood Park Commission. Ms. Sullivan explained that she is interested in contributing to the overall use, operation and programming of the park. She also discussed her interest in fundraising to support renovations to the Mary Wood Park House.

**b.) Conduct interviews or Board and Commission reappointments**

Ms. Leonard shared that the applicant scheduled to interview for reappointment was not present and that his interview would be rescheduled for November 18, 2020.

**MANAGER MATTERS**

**a.) Consider approving Fire Stipend distributions for FY2020**

Ms. Cecco provided an overview of the Fire Stipend program, which was established in 2019. She asked Council to consider authorizing distribution of funds to eligible program participants at the November Voting Meeting.

**b.) Consider approving St. Matthew's fee waiver request for use of the A-Field for outdoor church services**

**Ms. Barton made a motion to approve St. Matthew's fee waiver request for use of the A-Field for outdoor church services for November 1 and 8, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.**

**c.) Consider approving the following zoning escrow releases:**

- a. 826-828 Fayette Street in the amount of \$320.66**
- b. 12 West Eighth Avenue in the amount of \$124.62**
- c. 110-161 Washington Street in the amount of \$814.32**
- d. 72-74 Poplar Street in the amount of \$696.19**
- e. 301-303 West Fourth Avenue in the amount of \$181.99**

**Mr. Griffin made a motion to approve the release of the following zoning escrow deposits: 826-828 Fayette Street in the amount of \$320.66, 12 West Eighth Avenue in the amount of \$124.62, 110-161 Washington Street in the amount of \$814.32, 72-74 Poplar Street in the amount of \$696.19 and 301-303 West Fourth Avenue in the amount of \$181.99, seconded by Ms. Sokolowski.**

Ms. Cecco added an item to the agenda. She asked Council to consider extending the local disaster emergency through January 6, 2021.

**Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-31 extending the local disaster emergency declaration through January 6, 2021, 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 announced that the County is recycling campaign signs and shared participating drop-off locations in the area. He also shared that a resident delivered food to the Police Department as a thank you for finding her dog. Mayor Aronson announced that he would be hosting QPR gatekeeper training for suicide prevention on November 8, 2020.

Mr. Stokley inquired about the patching of the cracks at the basketball courts at Sutcliffe Park. Ms. Cecco replied that Administration is in the process of receiving quotes and finalizing a timeline for the project.

Ms. Barton thanked the residents in her ward for voting in the 2020 election.

Ms. Sokolowski thanked those who participated in the Borough's Virtual Halloween Costume Contest.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brittany Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, stated that no public comment was received via email submission.

Judy Smith-Kressley, 117 West 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, had a question about the waiver of off-street parking for 319 Forrest Street. She asked if the tenant would be utilizing off-street parking spaces to accommodate vehicles waiting to be serviced. Mr. Gravinese replied that cars would be stored and serviced in the garage.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Stephanie Cecco,  
Borough Secretary