

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, August 31, 2016

SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING

PRESENT: James Griffin, Council President
Karen Tutino, Council Vice-President
Robert Stokley, Senior Council Member
Anita Barton, Council Member
Tina Sokolowski, Council Member
Colleen Leonard, Council Member
Jane Flanagan, Council Member

ALSO PRESENT: Richard J. Manfredi, Borough Manager

CALL TO ORDER

The Special Public Meeting of the Conshohocken Borough Council duly advertised, was held at Conshohocken Borough Hall, 400 Fayette Street, Conshohocken, PA. Mr. James Griffin, Council President, called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Council President announcements shared.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a.) Continue Council 2017 Goal-setting discussion

Mr. Manfredi introduced the agenda item. He provided Council with a listing of their ranked 2017 goals that had been sorted in descending order from highest priority to lowest as calculated by the mean, median, and mode scores of each item. Council decided to proceed by reading and reviewing each goal in order.

Mr. Manfredi began the discussion by explaining that the highest-ranked goal was the installation of a track around the A-Field. In response, Mr. Stokley presented a plan of the A-field from 2005 that depicted a potential track as well as other features and commented that he and Ms. Leonard were in agreement that the walking track should be the first priority and that other items shown could be planned for later. Ms. Sokolowski asked the Council if they were in agreement that parks and recreation would be a priority in 2017 and the other members agreed that it would be. After further discussion, Mr. Manfredi moved on to the next goal, which was to address traffic and transportation issues in the Borough and analyze condition options.

Mr. Manfredi explained that completion of this item would require a Borough-wide traffic evaluation study and Ms. Barton, Mr. Griffin, and Mr. Stokley expressed their concerns with performing an additional study at this time. Mr. Stokley then commented that a gentleman had been struck by a vehicle recently while attempting to cross Fayette Street at the CVS

corner; he suggested that an arch light be installed at the location to make crossing safer and the other members of Council were in agreement.

Mr. Manfredi then shared the third goal to consider alternatives for pedestrian crossing safety on Fayette Street and explained that Council had previously discussed the item and considered initiating a campaign in the immediate future to encourage pedestrian crossing at signalized intersections. He provided an update on the status and then inquired if Council wanted to keep this goal as a high priority; Ms. Sokolowski replied that it should remain so until Council is able to review the results of the interim campaign step.

Council then discussed the goal regarding the Fayette Street Road Diet Study. Mr. Manfredi explained that the costs to perform the study could be mitigated by funds that were expected to come from impact fees. Ms. Leonard commented that Council might like to begin the research with PennDOT to determine if it is feasible and Mr. Manfredi replied that PennDOT has initially been in favor of the road diet. Council then discussed the impact the road diet and other potential traffic calming measures would have on Fayette Street and its surrounding neighborhoods if traffic were diverted to other routes.

Next, Council discussed its goal to fund Leeland Mansion Reuse. Mr. Manfredi shared that the report from the Conshohocken Economic Development Corporation had been drafted and that he would share it shortly. Mr. Stokley and Ms. Barton commented on several areas of the building in need of immediate repair and Ms. Tutino added that any issues that would cause long-term damage should be addressed immediately; Council gave Mr. Manfredi their consent to make the necessary repairs to the building and placed funding the reuse on hold.

Council then moved on to discuss the next goal to install new and updated parks equipment. Mr. Manfredi shared that the Borough has started a process of visiting each park with the landscape architect to develop park designs and cost figures for 2017. Ms. Sokolowski asked when they could expect to see the improvements implemented and Mr. Manfredi replied that they plan to go out to bid in January and begin construction in spring of 2017. Ms. Flanagan requested that each park get at least one new piece of equipment before Mr. Manfredi moved on to the next item to prioritize park equipment upgrades. He stated that he would have staff price each proposed piece of equipment so that Council could determine what they would like to place at each park in the event that particular parks do not get a complete redesign.

Mr. Manfredi introduced the next item to repair curbing within the Borough at Borough expense. Mr. Griffin commented that the Borough should first make repairs to damaged curbs at its own properties such as Mary Wood Park. Ms. Sokolowski requested to move on to the next item since Mr. Stokley had exited the Chambers briefly and it was his matter. In response, Mr. Manfredi addressed the next goal to resolve drainage issues at Sutcliffe Park by explaining that Mr. Hughes, the Director of Engineering, Licenses & Inspections, was already working on solutions to the issue.

Mr. Stokley then re-entered and Council revisited the question on curbing. Council discussed how the curbs had been addressed before and Mr. Buek clarified that curbs had been repaired for the last twenty years as part of the road program. Mr. Manfredi then added for clarification that there are two similar programs; the road program addresses the infrastructure and includes curb repairs and the mill and paving program does not. Mr. Manfredi then asked if Council would like to continue to replace curbing as part of the overall infrastructure program and if Council wanted to repair curbing also now when the mill and paving occurs. After discussion, Council was concerned about the additional costs to add the curb repairs to the mill and pave program, so Mr. Manfredi suggested requesting an alternate bid to include the costs of curbing repairs

needed each time the mill and pave occurs for Council to evaluate whether or not to include curb repairs; Ms. Sokolowski commented that she would not like the position the alternate bids would put Council in.

The next goal discussed was to systematically improve corner stormwater management access and egress at select intersections. Mr. Manfredi explained that he believed this goal was a policy decision for the Borough to start identifying select intersections that require stormwater improvements and make their repairs a higher priority. Mr. Manfredi suggested that Borough staff could price the intersections and Council was in agreement that staff should begin this process.

Mr. Manfredi then introduced the next goal for Mary Wood Park Equipment & Improvements and explained that that topic was addressed in an earlier goal before discussing the next goal for A-Field Basketball Courts. Ms. Leonard requested that the track and park equipment installations should be installed first and that the basketball courts and the next goal for an ice rink at the B-Field should be researched in the interim. The other members of Council were in agreement with Ms. Leonard's suggestion. Ms. Sokolowski commented that Council should also consider other items such as tennis courts and soccer fields that the Borough also does not have at this time and decide if they should plan for them; in response, Mr. Manfredi mentioned that several plans including the Riverfront Plan, Comprehensive Plan, and Recreation Plan may include designs for these ideas.

Mr. Manfredi asked Ms. Tutino if she was still interested in pursuing the next goal for Beach Volleyball at Sutcliffe but, following Council discussion on topic, she shared her wish to see the feature added to the riverfront instead due to concerns about parking availability at Sutcliffe. Ms. Sokolowski commented that, if parking is a concern at Sutcliffe, the Borough should take a look at solutions.

Mr. Manfredi then asked Mr. Stokley if the next goal to expand a summer basketball league was still something for Council to consider because the Borough had already done a lot to reach this goal recently. Mr. Stokley shared that he would like to see the goal remain active because he wanted to see the league be expanded through the addition of more Conshohocken residents. Mr. Manfredi explained what the Borough had been doing to communicate the availability of programs such as the summer basketball league and Ms. Sokolowski added that the Borough may wish to reevaluate if it is sufficient. Before moving on, Mr. Manfredi commented that the Borough would continue to push the program and Mr. Stokley shared that he was grateful for what had been done so far with the program.

Mr. Manfredi then introduced the next goal regarding the rowing center and granting the public access to the boat ramp. Ms. Barton shared that the Borough had looked into granting the public access to the existing ramp utilized by emergency services but it was not feasible and so the next question was to consider if the Borough should install a new ramp for public use. She added that the ramp used by the rowing center is only accessible to members of the center and residents have been hesitant to join only for that amenity. Ms. Sokolowski commented that the price of memberships at the rowing center had decreased significantly from \$500.00 to \$135.00. Ms. Leonard inquired if the Borough had ever considered allowing motorized boats to launch from the boat ramp; Mr. Manfredi replied that it had not been planned for. A resident, Ms. Rosemary Northcutt commented that, during a meeting on the Riverfront Plan, representatives from a local boat house discussed that allowing boats with motors to launch from the same location as un-motorized can cause complications such as waves that disrupt other boaters and damage to the river banks.

Mr. Manfredi then shared the next item regarding a possible YMCA Partnership and requested that discussion on the matter be deferred until he had discussed the possibility further with YMCA staff. Council consented to hold the discussion at a later date.

The next goal to consider creating small pocket parking lots was introduced by Mr. Manfredi and Mr. Stokley then elaborated on the need for additional parking in the Borough. Following the discussion, Council determined that they would like to explore the possibility for pocket parking on a case-by-case basis when and if potential locations are found. Mr. Manfredi added that he would bring potential locations to Council for discussion as they arise and agreed to remove the goal from the budgeting discussions at this time per Council's direction.

Mr. Manfredi then identified the next goal to consider creating small pocket parks and improve Sutcliffe Park. Council unanimously determined to remove the goal to create pocket parks and focus on the higher priorities to update parks equipment and research redesign options. Mr. Manfredi then introduced the next related goal to construct a dog park at the end of West 7th Avenue on Borough land. Ms. Barton reiterated that it would be a great asset to residents residing in this portion of the Borough. Council discussed the dog park and Mr. Manfredi asked if Council was interested in researching design options and cost to possibly place this new dog park. Mr. Manfredi also shared that the Rotary had expressed interest in taking responsibility for the existing dog park and commented that this could potentially affect the possible future dog park.

Next Mr. Manfredi introduced the goal to construct a Trail to Haines & Salvati and Ms. Tutino, who had suggested the trail initially, determined to remove the goal. The following goal for a skate park, which was suggested by Mr. Stokley, was also removed from Council's immediate priorities to be evaluated as a potential park addition in the future.

The final goal Council considered was to maintain alleys within the Borough. Mr. Stokley elaborated on the goal. Mr. Manfredi asked Council if they would be interested in establishing a policy that, beginning in the 2017 budget, they start to maintain the alleys. Mr. Manfredi added that Council had already considered making repairs to large potholes that currently exist in the Borough immediately and asked if they would be interested in also appropriating funds from the 2017 budget to begin evaluating and surveying the alleys to identify those that are in the worst condition. Mr. Griffin commented that taking over the maintenance of the alleys is a large undertaking. Mr. Stokley then replied that instead of fully taking responsibility of the alleys, they could consider fixing the alleys one time and then asking residents to maintain them. In response, Mr. Manfredi explained that that suggestion was not feasible because the Borough cannot pave the alleys unless they take ownership of them because they are private property.

MANAGER MATTERS

Mr. Manfredi then began his Manager Matters by explaining items that would be included on the next agenda such as commendations for police officers, a waiver of off-street parking hearing for 126 Fayette Street, a resolution to authorize the Borough to file its 2016 CDBG application, adopting the 2017 minimum municipal obligation, as well as bids for the infrastructure program, Sutcliffe Park Stormwater Improvements, and the A-Field Wall bid. He also mentioned a request for a block party on East 8th on Saturday, September 24th; Ms. Flanagan expressed her support for the event and, if the Police Chief has no objection, the event would be permitted.

Mr. Manfredi then asked Mr. Stokley to explain a request that they had received from St. Matthew Parish to close off 3rd between Fayette and Harry Street to allow for parking on Sunday mornings during mass. Council discussed the affect this closure would have and expressed their interest in possibly granting the request but did not take a vote.

Finally, Mr. Manfredi mentioned a letter that Representative Mary Jo Daley had shared with him during a recent meeting and asked for him to share with Council so they could potentially support a clean energy incentive plan.

LEGAL MATTERS

There were no legal matters for discussion.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

Ms. Sokolowski reminded the public that the regular schedule for Council meetings would resume on September 21, 2016.

Mr. Griffin shared that he received a request from the Police Department to hold bike training in the lower lot at the Borough Hall. Mr. Manfredi replied that he had also been made aware of the request and had coordinated with the YMCA to allow for the training to proceed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Rosemary Northcutt shared that she was concerned about the Council's enthusiasm for pocket parking lots and lack of enthusiasm for pocket parks. She also expressed her concern to see a triangle of land that she believes would be ideal for a pocket park possibly used for parking. Mr. Stokley responded to her comment and explained the Borough's perspective on the need for pocket parking.

Ms. Esther Pulver commented on the Borough's traffic issue and expressed her concern that the road diet idea discussed earlier might not be business-friendly. She also asked if a grade crossing at Oaks Street could be implemented so that residents and her tenants could access the Neve property. Mr. Manfredi replied that it had recently been discussed with SEPTA and PennDOT.

Mr. John Costello of the 400 Block of East 10th Avenue shared that he had lived in that location for twenty years and the street had not been milled once. He added that the proposed additions to the A-Field would necessitate the need for more parking there and the additional parking should be added around the same time as the proposed track. In response, Ms. Leonard commented that there is parking and people may not know. Mr. Costello added that he agrees with Ms. Pulver that drivers would leave Fayette Street if a road diet were implemented. Mr. Manfredi commented to both Ms. Pulver and Mr. Costello that diverting traffic to the side streets had been discussed and planned for on numerous occasions.

Ms. Esther Pulver also suggested using flags, blinking lights, or some other tool to make pedestrian crossing on Fayette safer before the meeting was adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard J. Manfredi
Borough Secretary