

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

PUBLIC MEETING held via Webex 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 Webex 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.

LAND USE MATTERS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

There were no land use matters, public hearings and ordinances.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

a.) 72-74 Poplar Street Zoning Hearing Board Application

Eric Johnson, Zoning Officer, provided an overview of the property and building use. He explained that the applicant previously installed a freestanding exterior walk-in refrigerator and is now seeking relief from the requirement that accessory structures be installed a minimum of three (3) feet away from side property lines. Edward Hughes, the applicant's attorney, presented photographs of the walk-in refrigerator and discussed the location of the refrigerator and other structures on the property. Mr. Griffin asked if any complaints regarding the walk-in refrigerator were received from neighboring property owners. Mr. Hughes mentioned that a fence was installed to rectify a complaint from a neighbor about property maintenance. Ms. Leonard asked if the applicant had spoken to any of the neighboring property owners about the proposal. Paul Delbuono, property manager, replied that the application has not been discussed with neighbors. Mr. Delbuono explained the circumstances surrounding the installation of the fence and confirmed that the noise from the exhaust fan was fixed. He provided reasoning for the purchase and location of the second walk-in refrigerator. Ms. Sokolowski asked if the location of the walk-in refrigerator obstructs the emergency exit. Mr. Delbuono replied that egress remains accessible.

b.) 301-303 West Fourth Avenue Zoning Hearing Board Application

Eric Johnson stated that the properties located at 301 and 303 West 4th Ave are newly developed residential dwellings that were constructed in violation of the front yard setback requirement. The applicant's attorney, Ameer Farrell, stated that the applicant is appealing the Zoning Officer's determination that the homes were constructed in violation of the front yard setback requirement. She made the argument that the Zoning Officer's determination fails to account for the provision in the Zoning Ordinance which permits the front yard setbacks to be altered to meet adjoining property setbacks. Ms. Leonard asked if the residences were built in accordance with the approved land development record plan. Ms. Farrell confirmed that the proposed as-built plan is not consistent with the approved record plan. Russ Cardamone, the applicant, confirmed that residences were constructed to match the adjoining established building line of existing residences, not to match the record. Ms. Sokolowski asked why the setback violation was not identified during construction. Ms. Cecco provided a brief overview of the land use approval and construction process. She added that the Borough Engineer is responsible for inspecting public improvements during construction and that it is the developer's responsibility to follow the specifications set forth in the land development and zoning approvals.

MANAGER MATTERS

a.) Consider ratifying Resolution 2020-11 suspending the license application and fee requirements of the sidewalk dining license requirements

Ms. Cecco shared, that due to the outbreak of COVID-19, Borough Administration recommends the suspension of the license application and fee requirements of the sidewalk dining license requirements until December 31, 2020. Ms. Barton inquired about compliance with COVID-19 regulations and guidelines by restaurant owners. Ms. Cecco replied that Code Enforcement and Police would work with restaurant owners to ensure that restaurants are operating in a safe manner. Ms. Tutino voiced a concern regarding not requiring the submission of a certificate of insurance to the Borough. Ms. Sokolowski recommended including a requirement that a certificate of insurance demonstrating proper insurance coverage be made available upon request. Council agreed.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-11 suspending the license application and fee requirements of the sidewalk dining license requirements with the stipulation to provide proof of insurance upon request, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Consider approving Resolution 2020-12 temporarily prohibiting animals into Mary Wood Park

Ms. Cecco explained that in preparation for the re-opening of parks, administration is recommending that animals be prohibited in Mary Wood Park until Montgomery County enters the green phase of the re-opening plan.

Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-12 temporarily prohibiting animals into Mary Wood Park, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

c.) Consider approving Resolution 2020-13 approving an extension of the local disaster emergency

Mr. Stokley made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-13 approving an extension of the local disaster emergency to June 3, 2020, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

d.) Consider accepting the resignations of Dog Park Advisory Committee members

Ms. Barton made a motion to accept the resignations of Celia King and Nick Cirulli from the Dog Park Advisory Committee, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

e.) Consider approving 144 West Ninth Avenue financial security release no. 1 in the amount of \$45,196.75

Ms. Cecco explained that the Borough Engineer inspected the completed site improvements and is recommending the release of \$45,196.75.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to approve 144 West Ninth Avenue financial security release no. 1 in the amount of \$45,196.75, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

f.) Consider approving 701 Jones Street financial security release no. 4 in the amount of \$18,183.00

Ms. Cecco explained that the Borough Engineer inspected the completed site improvements and is recommending the release of \$18,183.00.

Mr. Griffin made a motion to approve 701 Jones Street financial security release no. 4 in the amount of \$18,183.00, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

g.) Consider a tuition reimbursement for Detective Walter

Ms. Tutino made a motion to approve a tuition reimbursement for Detective Walter, seconded by Mr. Griffin. The motion carried 7-0.

DEPARTMENT MATTERS

There were no department matters.

LEGAL MATTERS

a.) Discussion on AmerisourceBergen RACP Grant-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 8 million dollars for the SORA development, and more specifically for development of AmerisourceBergen's new headquarters. Mr. Peters discussed each of the four (4) grant-related documents and asked Council to review each document over the next two (2) weeks. Ms. Cecco stated that Council would consider approving the RACP grant-related agreements at the Voting Meeting in May.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

a.) Mary Wood Park Commission Centennial Event (Council Member Flanagan)

Ms. Flanagan shared that the Centennial Event at Mary Wood Park scheduled for November 2021 is on hold.

b.) Consider ratifying Proclamation 2020-03 Bells Across Pennsylvania Day (Mayor Aronson)

Mayor Aronson shared that he issued a proclamation in support of Bella Across Pennsylvania Day, an initiative of the Pennsylvania State Mayor's Association, which took place on May 3, 2020. He explained that residents across the state rang bells for three (3) minutes to recognize and honor individuals on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Sokolowski made a motion to ratify Proclamation 2020-03 Bells Across Pennsylvania Day, seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion carried 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brittany Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, announced that one (1) individual submitted public comment via email. She read the public comment. John Costello, 413 East 10th Avenue, asked if the County's proposed plan for consolidated polling locations are permanent or temporary for the 2020 June 2nd Primary Election. He also asked if the Borough plans to hold the July 3rd Fireworks event. Ms. Leonard responded that the consolidated polling locations would be temporary for the June 2nd Primary Election only. Ms. Sokolowski shared that members of Council have voiced their objection to the change to the County officials. Ms. Cecco replied that Borough Administration is evaluating all Borough special events while monitoring COVID-19.

Mayor Aronson announced that the 2020 Art Festival and Car Show would be held virtually on June 6, 2020.

Ms. Barton recognized Bells Across Pennsylvania Day.

Ms. Flanagan encouraged everyone to stay safe.

Mr. Griffin hoped that everyone is staying safe and healthy.

Ms. Leonard shared the process by which Council makes decisions. She explained that Council holds Work Sessions to discuss and review potential actions items prior to the Voting Meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Cecco,
Borough Secretary