

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, June 5, 2024

PUBLIC MEETING

PRESENT: Tina Sokolowski, Council President
Kathleen Kingsley, Council Vice-President
Anita Barton, Senior Council Member
Alan Chmielewski, Council Member
Stacy Ellam, Council Member
Ralph Frey, Council Member
Adrian Serna, Council Member
Yaniv Aronson, Mayor

ALSO PRESENT: Stephanie Cecco, Borough Manager
Michael E. Peters, Borough Solicitor

PUBLIC HEARING ON HOME PROGRAM APPLICATION

Christine Stetler, Community Development and Grant Management Coordinator, shared that the Borough would like to apply for \$250,000.00 in federal HOME Program funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and HUD. She explained that the funds would be utilized for the Borough's Housing Rehabilitation Program. Ms. Stetler shared that a recent change in the Borough's Housing Rehabilitation Program Guidelines allows households who previously received rehabilitation services to apply for additional work. This has generated ten (10) new applications for assistance. She asked for public comment. There was no public comment.

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Meeting of the Conshohocken Borough Council duly advertised, was held at the Conshohocken Borough Hall, 400 Fayette Street, Conshohocken, PA. Ms. Sokolowski, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Sokolowski announced that an Executive Session was held immediately prior to the regularly scheduled public meeting on property and personnel matters.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

a.) Conduct an interview for a vacancy on the Civil Service Commission

Ms. Sokolowski introduced Daniel Swartley McArdle who was present to interview for a vacancy on the Civil Service Commission. Mr. Swartley McArdle shared that he has been serving on the Planning Commission for five (5) years and is interested in serving the Borough in an additional capacity. He shared that he served in the Army National Guard and discussed his relevant work experience. He discussed the role of the Civil Service Commission and his priorities if appointed. Mr. Peters stated that he would take a look at the Civil Service Regulations to confirm if Mr. Swartley McArdle is permitted to serve on two (2) Borough Boards/Commissions.

b.) Consider appointing Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP for legal services as Borough Special Counsel

Ms. Kingsley made a motion to appoint Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel LLP for legal services as Borough Special Counsel, seconded by Ms. Kingsley. The motion carried 7-0.

PRESENTATIONS

a.) Proclamation recognizing National Public Works Week

Ms. Barton read a proclamation recognizing May 19-25, 2024, as National Public Works Week.

Ms. Barton made a motion to approve Proclamation 2024-05 recognizing May 19-25, 2024, as National Public Works Week, seconded by Ms. Kingsley. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Stormwater Management Presentation, Dan Ingram, Stormwater Management Manager

Dan Ingram, Stormwater Management Manager, was present to discuss the newly created Stormwater Management Department. Mr. Ingram provided an overview of the inspection process, which included the regular inspection, testing, and replacement or repair of stormwater systems. He reviewed the departmental equipment and training programs. He discussed completed and future projects.

c.) Conshohocken Cab Shuttle Program Update, Shauna Wylesol, Operations Executive Assistant

Shauna Wylesol, Operations Executive Assistant, was present to discuss the Conshohocken Cab Shuttle Program. Ms. Wylesol provided an update on the shuttle program regarding the current route and ridership. She shared that feedback provided to the Borough shows that riders feel the route is too long to rely on the shuttle for restaurant visits and nightlife. Therefore, Borough administration is recommending a proposed change to the Conshohocken Cab schedule, specifically eliminating stops 9 through 13 after 6:00 PM.

Mr. Frey made a motion to authorize the proposed adjustment to the Conshohocken Cab Schedule for evening hours based on rider feedback, seconded by Ms. Kingsley. The motion carried 7-0.

LAND USE MATTERS, PUBLIC HEARINGS AND ORDINANCES

a.) Discussion on a future Public Safety Services Facility

i. Discussion with Public Safety representatives on the status of Fire Services and Ambulance Services in the Borough of Conshohocken

Ms. Cecco introduced representatives from Conshohocken Fire Company No. 2, Washington Fire Company No. 1 and Narberth Ambulance to discuss current and future services and facilities for first responders and request that Borough Council consider a land acquisition to build a future home for Public Safety Services.

Calvin Pearlman, Deputy Fire Chief, provided an overview of the Fire Department, including personnel, facilities, equipment and response statistics.

Kristen Davis, President of Conshohocken Fire Company No. 2, explained that the size of the facility is inadequate. She stated that there is no room for growth for personnel or apparatus.

Leo Costello, Vice President of Conshohocken Fire Company No. 2, described the condition of the current facility, which requires major and costly renovations.

Andrew Carlin, President of Washington Fire Company No. 1, described the current facility. He stated that the Borough has space available in the leased bays for equipment, such as water rescue equipment. He discussed that it is difficult to recruit and maintain volunteer firefighters.

Bob Weber, Deputy Chief of Operations for Narberth Ambulance, explained how their current location is not adequate for future growth. Bill Weber, Assistant Chief of Operations for Narberth Ambulance, discussed the importance of training. He explained that cross training is not an option available with all three entities located in separate facilities.

Ms. Sokolowski inquired about ownership of the current facilities. Representatives responded that the volunteer fire companies own and operate their own individual facilities and Narberth Ambulance owns and operates its own facility. Representatives discussed that their organizations must dedicate time and resources to facility management and operations.

Mr. Frey asked about what would happen to these facilities with this potential land acquisition and construction of a unified Public Safety Facility. Mr. Carlin responded that the Borough would continue to lease the fire bays at Washington Fire Company No. 1. He explained that the facility provides a location near the river to store emergency equipment needed to deploy pertaining to the riverfront. Ms. Davis replied that Conshohocken Fire Company No. 2 would look to sell the current facility at market rate. Mr. Weber responded that Narberth Ambulance would evaluate options to sell and/or repurpose their current location.

Mr. Pearlman discussed additional benefits that a modern-day facility would provide. He explained that a facility with the appropriate space, tools, and amenities would allow firefighters and EMTs to properly maintain equipment, centrally house equipment utilized to complete routine public safety inspections for businesses and apartment complexes, host training for all types of emergency responses, provide sleeping quarters and associated amenities to allow for future 24/7 coverage, provide sufficient office space, and allow for better recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Representatives discussed how the Borough's investment in response equipment has played an important role in ensuring quick and safe response times.

Mr. Frey inquired about what would happen if this property acquisition does not come to fruition. Representatives of the fire companies and Narberth Ambulance responded that they would continue to search for other opportunities to acquire the space needed.

Representatives discussed how providing a sufficient support system like a new, unified facility would help recruit high quality volunteers.

ii. Discussion on a property acquisition opportunity at 1109-1119 Fayette Street and 1201 E. Butler Pike for a future Public Safety Services Facility

Ray Sokolowski, Executive Director of Operations, stated that the Borough of Conshohocken does not own or operate these facilities, which poses challenges when looking at the future of public safety services for both the Borough and the public safety entities. He explained how the land acquisition opportunity could help alleviate and proactively mitigate those issues. Mr. Sokolowski shared that the concept of a unified facility has been discussed in the past. He explained that all other locations that were evaluated were not viable. He shared that the Borough was presented with a unique opportunity to secure property where its own public safety building could be built in the future. He shared that the negotiated purchase price is \$5.1 million.

iii. Discussion on a draft Agreement of Sale with Provco Pineville Fayette LP

Nicole Norcross, Borough Special Counsel, discussed the terms of the draft Agreement of Sale, which included terms related to the purchase price and deposit, due diligence period and conditions of closing including required environmental remediation that would be an additional cost to the Borough.

iv. Discussion on a debt reimbursement resolution and property acquisition authorization resolution

Ms. Norcross reviewed the proposed resolutions related to the property acquisition. She explained that the debt reimbursement resolution authorizes the Borough to reimburse itself from the proceeds of debt as applicable. She explained that the property acquisition authorization resolution authorizes the expenditure of funds and grants authority to the Borough Manager and Borough Solicitor to effectuate purchase and execute necessary documents.

v. Discussion on project financing options for consideration

Ms. Cecco presented Council with financing options to consider for the purchase of the property. She explained that the Borough could finance the \$5.1 million through Fulton Bank over 5, 10 or 15 years at interest rates between five and six percent. She recommended that Council consider utilizing a cash transaction given the Borough's cash position at the end of April was \$34 million.

Ms. Sokolowski called for public comment on the agenda item regarding a future Public Safety Services Facility.

Joy Manis, 222 West 6th Avenue, asked for clarification about what would happen to these facilities if the purchase was approved. Ms. Sokolowski and Ms. Cecco reiterated that Washington Fire Company No. 1 would continue to lease the fire bays to the Borough, Conshohocken Fire Company No. 2 would look to sell the current facility and Narberth Ambulance would evaluate options to sell and/or repurpose their current location.

Mary Tiernan, 1016 Harry Street, voiced concerns related to the significant financial investment. Ms. Sokolowski discussed Borough Council's strategic investment into public safety. Ms. Ellam explained that the Borough has invested in the necessary, life-saving resources that first responders need. Ms. Tiernan inquired about noise from the proposed facility and potential remediation costs.

b.) Discussion on an Ordinance amendment to the Borough's food vendor regulations

Mr. Peters shared that Borough Administration is recommending that Borough Council consider an amendment to the food vendor regulations to clarify that food vendors shall only be permitted in the SP-1, SP-2, and SP-3 Specially Planned Districts as well as procedures and requirements associated with food vendor licenses in the Borough. He asked Council to review the proposed ordinance amendment and consider authorizing its advertisement at the June Voting Meeting.

MANAGER MATTERS

a.) Consider approving Resolution 2024-08 establishing temporary parking regulations

Ms. Cecco shared that Borough Administration is requesting that Borough Council consider approving a resolution that would establish temporary parking regulations within the Borough, specifically a stop intersection at West First Avenue and Maple Street as a safety regulation and a handicap parking space in the area of 10 East 6th Avenue. She stated that these regulations would be temporary for a period of 90 days and that the regulations can be removed before the end of the 90 days or extended by subsequent action of Borough Council.

Mr. Chmielewski made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-08 establishing temporary parking regulations specifically a stop sign at W. 1st and Maple and a handicap parking space in the area of 10 E. 6th Avenue, seconded by Ms. Kingsley. The motion carried 7-0.

b.) Consider approving a stipulation agreement to increase the assessment value for 110 Washington Street (7 Tower Bridge)

Ms. Cecco asked Borough Council to consider approving a settlement stipulation agreement to increase the assessment value of 110 Washington Street (7 Tower Bridge) to the maximum value that is noted in the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Amended Project Plan.

Mr. Serna made a motion to approve a stipulation agreement to increase the assessment value of 110 Washington Street (7 Tower Bridge) to \$36,393,500, seconded by Ms. Barton. The motion carried 7-0.

c.) Consider accepting a resignation of an EAC member

Ms. Cecco shared that Gerhardt Arndt has resigned as a member of the EAC as he is no longer a resident of the Borough of Conshohocken.

Mr. Serna made a motion to accept the resignation of Gerhardt Arndt from the Environmental Advisory Council, seconded by Ms. Kingsley. The motion carried 7-0.

d.) Consider awarding a bid for the Sutcliffe Park Trail Reconstruction and Stormwater BMP Project

Ms. Cecco shared that Borough Engineer has reviewed the required contractor responsibility certification, subcontractor list, and subcontractor responsibility certifications for each listed subcontractor for the Sutcliffe Park Reconstruction and Stormwater BMP project as required by the Borough's Responsible Contractors Ordinance and has determined that Mecco Constructors, Inc. and its subcontractors are qualified, responsible contractors. Therefore, Borough Administration is recommending that Borough Council award the contract for the Sutcliffe Park Trail Reconstruction and Stormwater BMPs project to Mecco Constructors, Inc. in the amount of \$1,774,000.00 for all items under the base bid.

Mr. Serna made a motion to award a bid for the Sutcliffe Park Trail Reconstruction and Stormwater BMP Project to Mecco Constructors, Inc. in the amount of \$1,774,000 for all items under the base bid, seconded by Ms. Kingsley. The motion carried 7-0.

e.) Consider authorizing advertisement of an RFP for the construction of a storage facility at the Conshohocken Community Center

Mr. Frey made a motion to authorize advertisement for an RFP For the construction of a storage facility at the Conshohocken Community Center, seconded by Mr. Serna. The motion carried 7-0.

f.) Discussion on a Request for Proposals for Marketing Services

Ms. Cecco shared that Administration has drafted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant for marketing services. She explained that the Borough is seeking professional assistance to work directly with the Borough internal team to ensure the Borough has a strategic and successful marketing platform. Mr. Chmielewski added that the goal would be to provide ongoing services for consistent engagement with the community as the Borough pursues initiatives and special projects that highlight both borough and community wide accomplishments, successes, stories, and business highlights.

DEPARTMENT MATTERS

a.) Consider approving the Civil Service Commission certified patrol officer hire list and permit Chief Lennon to process conditional employment offers subject to physical and psychological examination results

Chief Lennon provided an overview of police testing and Civil Service Commission certification processes. He reviewed the Civil Service Commission certified patrol officer hire list and asked Borough Council to permit him to process conditional employment offers subject to final physical and psychological examination results.

Ms. Kingsley made a motion to approve the Civil Service Commission certified patrol officer hire list and permit Chief Lennon to process conditional employment offers subject to final physical and psychological examination results, seconded by Mr. Frey. The motion carried 7-0.

LEGAL MATTERS

There were no legal matters.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

Mayor Aronson thanked all parties responsible for making the Conshohocken Arts Festival and Car Show a success.

Mr. Serna thanked all the volunteers who attended the EAC Clean-up.

Ms. Sokolowski reminded everyone that Borough Council's regularly scheduled June Voting Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 18th due to the Juneteenth federal holiday.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Cecco,
Borough Secretary