

March 30, 2006

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Special Meeting of the Pottstown Borough Council was held on Wednesday, March 30, 2006 at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Meeting Room, Pottstown Borough Hall, 100 East High Street, Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

CALL TO ORDER

Councilors present were Mark Gibson, Arthur Green, Michael Wenzel, Stephen Toroney, Greg Berry, Jack Wolf and James Vlahos. Also present were Mayor Sharon Thomas, Borough Manager Jack Layne, Solicitor Charles Garner, Jr., Assistant Borough Manager Raymond Lopez and Borough Manager's Secretary Virginia Takach.

INVOCATION

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

CONDITIONAL USE HEARING – MRS. SMITH'S PIE

Solicitor Garner explained the application of Pottstown Redevelopment Group, LP, for a conditional use to permit the development of 120 attached single-family dwelling units in a mixed commercial/light industrial and residential redevelopment of the former Mrs. Smith's Pie plant. Mr. Garner entered several items into evidence.

Attorney Joseph McGrory was present representing the applicant. Mr. McGrory introduced several consultants and accepted testimony.

Richard Almquist, Wolfington Companies and Vice President, Pottstown Redevelopment Group, General Partner, explained the proposed plan for the former Mrs. Smith's site. He also outlined the proposed uses for commercial, office and residential purposes.

Matthew Hammond, Engineer, Traffic Planning & Design, Inc., testified with respect to the completed Traffic Impact Study for the proposed development, which was distributed to Council.

David Babbitt, David Babbitt & Associates, also testified on the Analysis of the Fiscal Impact to the Borough and the School District for the Gateway Commons Development, also distributed to Council.

John Wetzel, Engineer, McCarthy Engineering Associates, explained the Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan-Mrs. Smith's Redevelopment dated November 22, 2005 and last revised January 11, 2006.

Attorney McGrory requested these reports be entered into evidence.

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Several concerns were expressed by the Mayor and Council regarding the flood plain area, trash issues and proposed employment with respect to the project.

Alex Reibe, St. John's Byzantine Church – questioned if the church services and additional meetings were taken into consideration during the traffic study.

Mr. Hammond commented that since most services would be on Sunday when daily peak-hour traffic is not an issue, church services should not be impacted.

Dan Weand, 1010 North Evans Street, questioned the accuracy of the fiscal impact statement, adding that the developer should be responsible for any impact incurred beyond the projections of the report.

Dan Woodall, 740 Sandy Street, questioned the employment process for the work and demolition of the site.

Mr. Almquist advised that any money spent has been that of the property owners. He added that no money has yet been received from the State.

Solicitor Garner explained that Council has fifteen days to render a verbal decision and fifteen days beyond that date to render a written decision.

The hearing closed at 7:25 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING - AMENDMENT – COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN – 7:25 P.M.

Motion by Councilor Vlahos, seconded by Councilor Berry to amend the Borough's Community and Economic Development Action and Implementation Strategy to include the Action Item "Encourage Development of a Performing Arts Center on High Street."

Jim Fairchild, Economic Development Director, explained that the Borough's September 2000 Economic Development Plan does not presently reference an arts and cultural activity. He added that this is the first request to amend the plan, which would be required by the Montgomery County Revitalization Board in order to request funding for the proposed Performing Arts Center at 245 High Street. Mr. Fairchild advised that the grant request is for \$200,000 for Phase I of the project.

Councilor Toroney questioned the use for educational purposes on all three floors.

Mr. Fairchild responded that classes and rehearsals would be in the basement and top floor.

No public comment was received. The public hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

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BOROUGH MANAGER RESIGNATION

President Wolf read a letter from Borough Manager Jack Layne announcing his resignation effective April 30, 2006. Councilor Vlahos, seconded by Councilor Toroney, moved to accept Mr. Layne's resignation.

President Wolf, on behalf of the Mayor and Council, thanked Manager Layne for his ongoing efforts during his tenure as Borough Manager.

Motion carried: 7 ayes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Wolf recessed the meeting to executive session at 7:30 p.m. for deliberation of the Conditional Use hearing and a personnel issue.

The meeting reconvened at 8:21 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned on motion by Councilor Toroney at 8:22 p.m.

Attested,

Jack P. Layne, Jr.
Borough Manager