

December 8, 2021

ANNOUNCEMENT

Borough Manager Keller explained the format for this evening's meeting, advising that the meeting is a public in-person and a GoTo Meeting and available on-line as well. Public comments are being accepted through email and chat prior to 7:00 p.m. and will be announced to all. Comments are limited to 300 words to be in compliance with Council's three-minute rule and participants shall be identified accordingly.

CONDIITONAL USE HEARING – Deina Nafea Mohame Alashmali, 591 West High Street

Solicitor Garner opened a conditional use hearing at 6:30 p.m. and entered several Council exhibits into evidence.

Nafea Yahya Saba, father of the applicant, was present and sworn in as the applicant was unavailable. Mr. Saba testified that he has personal knowledge of his daughter's intent for the property. He stated that the neighborhood store will sell groceries, candy, cigarettes and lottery. The hours would be 7:00 a.m. -7:00 p.m. and no other convenient stores are withing 1,200 feet of the property. Mr. Saba added that the property also has seven apartments.

There were no comments and Solicitor Garner closed the hearing at 6:43 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The December 8, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Weand.

ATTENDANCE

Councilors present were Ryan Procsal, Lisa Vanni, Donald Lebedynsky, Trenita Lindsay, and Dan Weand. Also present were Borough Manager Justin Keller, Mayor Stephanie Henrick, Solicitor Charles Garner and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach. Councilors Kirkland and Paules were absent.

INVOCATION

President Weand requested a moment of silence and asked all to remember former Borough Manager Robert Jones, who was Manager from 1994 to 2003 and passed away on November 16, 2021.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Weand announced that an executive session was held prior to the meeting for one item of personnel with no action to be taken.

PRESENTATION – SCHUYLKILL RIVER GREENWAYS, TIM FENCHEL TAKE IT OUTDOORS IN RIVERFRONT PARK

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Elaine Schaefer, Executive Director of the Schuylkill River Greenways was present, along with Tim Fenchel, Deputy Director of Schuylkill River Greenways and Noah Phillips, of Take it Outdoors, to present the proposal to form a partnership with the Borough to create a Pottstown Outdoor Recreation Hub in Riverfront Park.

Ms. Schaefer explained the benefits of the Schuylkill River and the trails that enhance the Economic Development of the community. The Greenways has been in Pottstown for almost 20 years and providing the bike share for 15 years.

Tim Fenchel outlined the proposal for a partnership with Take it Outdoors, presently located in North Coventry Township, for bike sharing and kayak rentals to establish the Recreation Hub. He provided the many events that Take it Outdoors has sponsored and partnered with for the last five years. Mr. Fenchel presented a model of portable containers for the bikes and kayaks and recreational needs.

Mr. Phillips commented that he is expecting to implement the project in the spring of 2022.

Michael Lenhart commented that after reviewing the proposal he is in favor of the partnership for Riverfront Park.

It was the consensus of Council to authorize Staff to move forward with the Greenways and Take it Outdoors to review site work, the containers and any permitting required for partnership.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Infrastructure – Councilor Lebedynsky advised that the report was in the packet.
- b. Economic Development – Ms. Lee-Clark reported that PAED is very much in favor of the Greenways proposal. She also highlighted the weekend events including Santa's arrival and the tree lighting. Ms. Lee-Clark also presented logo for the new Pottstown Area Economic Development (PAED) and referred to the new website. She reviewed the first feature property, 343 East High Street and advised that there will be a fee associated with featuring the properties on the website. Ms. Lee-Clark also presented the PAED Board of Directors.
- c. Transportation – There was no meeting.
- d. Ordinance Review Committee – Councilor Procsal noted there was no meeting.
- e. Efficient Methods Committee – Councilor Lebedynsky stated that there was nothing new to report.

BOARDS & COMMITTEE REPORTS

- a. Emergency Services Report – Chief Hand advised that Santa will be going through town on the Fire Trucks on December 18th. He added that the Emergency Management Drill was held in November and went well. He also reported on this day's significant fire that occurred on North Evans Street and commended the Licensing & Inspections inspector for assisting the resident out of the building, along with Police and EMS staff.

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b. Human Relations Commission – Ms. Levensgood outlined the various December holidays and noted that the next meeting is scheduled for December 14th.

c. Land Bank – Ms. Lee-Clark reported that the Land Bank has selected a Solicitor, Steven Boell of Fitzpatrick, Lentz & Bubba of Allentown. The Board is expecting a transaction in the near future and will have a report for the February meeting.

d. Library – Ms. Hylton reported that staff member, Erin McNichol, has built a Christmas tree out of discarded books and for a donation of \$10, names can be added to the tree. Honorary plaques can also be purchased. Ms. Hylton noted that the signs to close off Washington Street are missing and therefore the project is delayed. She also reviewed fundraisers in the Library.

e. Ricketts Community Center – Councilor Lindsay referred to the report distributed, noting that needs for the Center will be posted on Facebook.

f. Pottstown School District – Councilor Lindsay reported that a threat was investigated at the Pottstown Middle School. She also announced that the District is hiring and also announced the new board members. Councilor Lindsay noted that the Higher Ground Church, South Street, will hold a Christmas give-away on December 19th.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Henrick thanked all involved with the Tree Lighting and Santa's arrival. She reminded all about of the Steel River Playhouse's , *A Christmas Carol*. She also reviewed the events she attended in the last month, including the Sly Fox track races and announced the Children's Christmas Party, December 11th at Sunnybrook and the Polar Bear Swim, January 1st in Riverfront Park.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller reported that PECO may not conclude paving until next spring due to the cold weather. He added that PECO is trying to resolve the two lights on the 400 block of High Street. Mr. Keller also reported that he, along with Chief Hand, met with the Fire Chiefs of each company, with an agreement to bring in a consultant to determine how to save taxpayers money.

Mr. Keller also advised that two projects are going out to bid, the Storm Water Arch Repair at 42 Walnut Street and the Riverfront Park erosion project, with openings scheduled for February 14th. He also provided an update on outstanding grants associated with Memorial Park. He added that the plans for Sundstrom Field will be out to bid in the near future and commended Representative Hennessey and Senator Mensch for their efforts on this project.

SEP-1

Mr. Keller advised that a second KEEP meeting was held on this date. The committee is serving as the Planning Commission for this project and is reviewing the Engineer's letter along with the 8-10 waivers. He noted that the Zoning Hearing Board has granted the variance requested, with an expectation of breaking ground in spring 2022. This should come to Council in January.

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REDNER'S TRAFFIC SIGNAL

Solicitor Garner explained the PennDOT request for a traffic light maintenance agreement for the intersection of North Charlotte Street and Mervine Street associated with the new Redner's Market gas station. The Borough is the owner of the traffic signal and PennDOT is requiring a resolution to approve the new Traffic Signal Maintenance Agreement.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT – CCTV

Solicitor Garner also explained the changes to the requirement of PennDOT in terminology for the closed circuit TV cameras at High and Hanover Streets and High and Armand Hammer Boulevard. PennDOT had previously requested a Memorandum of Understanding and is now requesting an Intergovernmental Agreement.

BERKEHIMER – APPOINTMENT OF LIAISON

Mr. Keller referred to the draft resolution required by Berkheimer to appoint the Finance Director and new Finance Supervisor, James Brophy, as liaison for Berkheimer, the collector of local taxes.

President Weand noted that these resolutions will be listed for action on Monday evening.

SALES AGREEMENT – 707 HAMILTON STREET

Mr. Keller requested that Council authorize the Solicitor to work with the new Land Bank Solicitor to prepare a sales agreement for the Borough property located at 707 Hamilton Street.

ZONING RELIEF, 344 EAST HIGH STREET

Solicitor Garner explained the variance request of James Swahl to convert a portion of the first floor to create a personal spa.

Councilor Procsal requested that a letter of support be sent to the Zoning Hearing Board.

TREES, INC. REQUEST FOR FUNDS FROM TREE FUND

Thomas Hylton was present and explained the project of Trees, Inc. for the maintenance of trees, dating back to 1983. He noted that as per the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, recent contributions in lieu of the required number of trees were as follows: \$10,000 from McDonald's; \$9,500 from the Car Wash and \$3,000 from Lords and Ladies,. He advised that a list is sent to the Borough Manager for approval and in addition, a letter to the residents. Mr. Hylton advised that the cost for the 2022 project is approximately \$30,000 for tree removal and replacement and \$27,000 for trimming. He is requesting \$22,500 from the Tree Fund and Trees, Inc. will provide the approximate balance of \$34,000. The project will take place in January, February and March of 2022.

CHEMICAL BID AWARDS

Mr. Keller advised that bids were opened November 16th and will have a recommendation for Monday evening.

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These items will be listed for approval on Monday evening.

BUDGET 2022

Mr. Keller provided an update on the draft budget of 2022, including favorable rates in health care, which resulted in a proposed increase of 2.9% tax increase or .042 mills for a total millage of 13.945. This will result in a tax increase of approximately \$40 annually for a home assessed at \$100,000. Mr. Keller added that the total budget stands at \$60,288,953.

President Weand advised that the budget and tax ordinance will be listed for approval on Monday evening, along with the 2022 Council meeting schedule.

UPCOMING BOARD VACANCIES

President Weand reviewed the upcoming vacancies for 2022, which will be considered at the January meeting.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT

None.

COUNCILORS' GENERAL DISCUSSION

Councilor Vanni commended all involved with the holiday celebrations.

Councilor Lebedynsky noted that it is good to see so many people downtown and restaurants open and crowded.

Councilor Lindsay agreed. She also advised that Pottstown High School will hold a concert on December 9th. She also commended the downtown celebrations and reminded all of the Children's Christmas Party at Sunnybrook, December 11th.

Mayor Henrick thanked all involved with the holiday celebrations during the past weekend.

President Weand praised the downtown events and thanked Staff for their efforts in reducing the tax increase to the taxpayers.

ADJOURNMENT

President Weand adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.