

Borough Council Work Session

March 21, 2022

The monthly Work Session meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held on the above date, was called to order by President Tracy Burke at 7:00 p.m. Council President Tracy Burke noted that this meeting is also available for the public to access through Zoom to monitor and make public comment. This meeting is being recorded and will be posted to the Borough Website. The Borough Council Work Session was attended by the following members and staff:

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| President Tracy W. Burke | Mayor Daniel L. Yocum |
| Vice-President Edward Huber | |
| Councillor Matthew J. DiNenna | |
| Councillor Daryl W. Littlefield | |
| Councillor Julie A. Munden | Borough Manager P. Michael Coll |
| Councillor Donna Rogers | |
| Councillor Matthew Sholly (Zoom) | |
| Councillor Richard M. Walczak | Police Chief Brian A. Newhall |
| Councillor Courtnee L. Wampole | Public Works Director Steven Coll |

Prior to beginning the scheduled meeting Agenda, President Tracy Burke inquired if anyone in the audience has any specific concerns or public comment. There was no public comment.

Council President Tracy Burke began the work session with a presentation by Brian Grant of Select Properties and the Towne Gate Commons development. The Goddard School expressed interest in the development in the location of the B1 and B2 commercial pad sites which are adjacent to the commercial pad site for the Dollar General retail store at Market Street and County Line Road. The Goddard School site will front along Souder Way. The Mixed Use Redevelopment zoning district provides for retail, office and restaurant uses. The Ordinance does not specifically provide for a day care use, nor does the Ordinance prohibit such uses. The MUR Zoning District does provide flexibility to Borough Council to consider similar permitted uses by Conditional Use. A series of exhibits were displayed to illustrate the location of the proposed building, architectural elevations and the construction of additional parking in place of the B1 commercial pad site. Borough Council discussed the history of the MUR Zoning District, noting that the proposed B1 and B2 commercial sites were tucked away inside the development and there was a level of concern over the viability of a commercial user for this location. Borough Council discussed traffic concerns at peak times for the day care and potential impact to the development and surrounding properties. Councillor Edward Huber noted that the Souderton Planning Commission will be interested in estimates of traffic volume and parking required for peak times. Overall, Borough Council supported the concept and will formally consider the use through a Conditional Use Hearing. The Borough Manager will coordinate next steps with the Borough Solicitor, developer and Goddard School.

POLICE ITEMS

Police Chief Brian Newhall reported that he is working to purchase pole mounted speed timing devices. An added benefit of the equipment is that they can be used to display messages to the motorists.

Considerable conversation was held concerning the request to hold a fireworks event in the Community Park in conjunction with Concert Sundaes. Councillor Richard Walczak provided a Public Safety Committee report, expressing safety concerns and consideration of appropriate fall zones. Fire Marshall Steven Coll and Fire Chief Benjamin Shearer discussed past events and the safety and fall zones that were utilized for those events. They also expressed concern with obtaining sufficient mutual aid from neighboring fire departments to assist with protection. Borough Council discussed a hybrid event which could use smaller sized shells, no 3 inch shells, more ground events and the potential of adding a laser show. Smaller shells and more ground events will lessen safety concerns and provide a more manageable fall zone. Borough Council expressed a favorable opinion to move forward in this direction. It was noted that the installation of the new playground equipment will be challenging to future fireworks events in the Community Park.

HIGHWAY ITEMS

Public Works Director Steven Coll reported that crews handled a snow event in March. The remaining salt supply has been moved to the salt bin at the Second Street garage. Crews installed safety mulch around various playground equipment. Crews will be installing silt socks in the Community Park in preparation for site work and the installation of storm drainage within the next week. Crews will be working with Trout Brothers Concrete to replace the trough drain at the bottom of the Chestnut Street Municipal Parking lot. The walls of the drain are failing and must be replaced.

CKS Engineers formally submitted land development plans to Franconia Township for the Public Works Facility project on the Borough's Cherry Lane property. The Franconia Township Planning Commission extended conditional preliminary/final approval to the development plans at their March meeting. The Franconia Township Engineer noted a Zoning Ordinance conflict with the preservation of the existing garage building on the site. The Borough intends to utilize this building as an accessory storage garage. By constructing a new principal building on the site, the existing garage becomes an accessory building which is too large to comply with the Franconia Township Zoning Ordinance. The Borough will seek a variance to maintain the existing structure as an accessory use building at a hearing before the Franconia Township Zoning Hearing Board on April 7, 2022.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

President Tracy Burke noted that there were a series of video presentations for this evening which were best viewed in the Council Chambers. Starting in April, President Burke will hold the monthly work sessions in the rear Conference Room, unless video presentations dictate otherwise. Councillor Matt Sholly recommended that he will explore options to increase the functionality of the Conference Room for video displays and for Zoom accessibility. Councillor Daryl Littlefield will assist Councillor Sholly in this effort.

President Burke attended a PSAB Seminar for Newly Elected Officials. During the seminar the group discussed the posting of Zoom recordings to municipal websites. PSAB suggested consideration of a policy to delete the Zoom recordings from the website upon formal approval of the written meeting minutes. This same policy suggestion will be implemented by Souderton Borough; staff will be authorized to delete the recordings from the Souderton Borough website following formal approval of the meeting minutes by Souderton Borough Council.

President Burke reported that the Administrative Committee is evaluating the development of a more formal matrix to log, track and record resolutions to public complaints or concerns.

DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

Borough Councillor Courtnee Wampole reported on the Economic Development Committee progress concerning the Freight Building lease. The committee received additional financial documentation from the microbrewery. The next steps is for the committee to tour the interior of the freight building and surrounding site to better understand the scope of work involved in this project. A Letter of Intent will be drafted and circulated for review and formal authorization at the April Borough Council meeting.

Borough Councillor Daryl Littlefield noted that discussions continue between the Economic Development Committee and representatives of the Souderton Charter School concerning their property at 27 S. Front Street.

Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that the Souderton Zoning Hearing Board will be meeting on Tuesday, March 29, 2022 to consider a variance request concerning property at 105 N. School Lane. The owner is proposing to located a shed within the required front yard setback from E. Chestnut Street.

The Borough Solicitor is assisting with District Court action against the owners of 236 E. Broad Street for a series of Property Maintenance Code violations.

SANITATION ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll briefly reported that Souderton Borough has

received requests for sewer capacity to serve a new planned 84 unit residential development on Beck Road in Franconia Township. Our Sanitary Sewer Engineer has reviewed the request and included the additional capacity in the current Chapter 94 Waste Load report to DEP.

RECREATION ITEMS

Borough Councillor Edward Huber reviewed proposed membership fees and policies for the Souderton Community Pool for the 2022 summer season. Sunday will be a members only day. Daily admissions will again be sold at the pool by either credit card or by check, no cash sales will be accepted. The goal of the committee is to increase membership sales, increase revenue from daily admissions and to resume swim lessons and the use of the party room rentals. The Borough may need to add some seasonal pool staff to assist with this effort. The 2022 membership fees were favorably viewed by Borough Council and sales will go live on the website this week.

Borough Manager Michael Coll noted that the special park committee has finalized the color selections for the new playground and fitness equipment. A fifty percent (50%) deposit check will be going out to Kompan this week to formally move the equipment into production. The delivery time is 16 to 20 weeks, so installation will not occur until late summer early fall.

PROPERTY ITEMS

Borough Councillor Julie Munden reported on a meeting scheduled for March 22, 2022 with the architects to discuss revised floor plans for the administrative wing of the Souderton Municipal Building. In particular the revised plans will address a larger Conference Room for Borough Council Work Session meetings and public accessibility to the Conference Room from the main lobby, which will require the relocation of the existing restrooms.

FINANCE ITEMS

Borough Manager Michael Coll reported that the Finance Committee has met to review the Borrowing Base and Debt Statements for the Borough. The statements have been revised to reflect the revised \$500,000 loan for the Community Park project. The Borough has a little more than \$6,000,000 in capacity to consider additional non-electoral debt for capital improvement projects. The Borough Manager also noted that he will be working on completing the federal report to utilize the federal ARPA funds for the renovation of the Souderton Police Department offices.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Councillor Daryl Littlefield noted that the Public Outreach Committee is recommending that Souderton Borough Council continue to have a table at the Third Fridays events. President Tracy Burke noted that the Borough Council Office Hours should continue and he suggested opportunities to try and grow the event. An initial first step will be to advertise the Office Hours on the Main Street sign and President Burke suggested that other Borough Councillors try to attend the event as well.

Mayor Dan Yocum reported that he is working on developing a “Mayor’s Update” which will be a brief printed document to be mailed out with the utility bills.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

P. Michael Coll, Secretary