

BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

May 10, 2021

APPROVED

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Borough of West Easton, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, was called to order at 6:30pm using Zoom videoconferencing, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Roll was taken; Council President Matthew Dees noted there was a quorum. Council members – Paul James, Pete Mammana, David Bolash, Janie Jones Brown, Ken Decker, Jr., and Steve Klaver were present. Mayor Daniel DePaul; Solicitor Steve Goudsouzian of Goudsouzian & Associates; Borough Manager, Joan Heebner and West Easton Borough Police Chief, Robert Mahady were present. Members of the public in attendance: Jeff Miggins, Leon Stull, K.C. Lezzer, owner of the Laurel Hills project; Jenna R. DiFrancesco, Esq, representing K.C. Lezzer/Laurel Hills.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved expenditures as presented. No discussion. Motion passed 7 - 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James seconded by Mr. Mammana; Council approved the Deposits and Receipts from April 2021. No discussion. Motion passed 7 – 0.

-Upon motion by Ms. Jones Brown, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved the minutes from the April 12, 2021, Council Meeting. No discussion. Motion passed 7- 0.

-Upon motion by Mr. Mammana, seconded by Mr. James; Council approved the Treasurer’s Report for April 2021. No discussion. Motion passed 7 – 0.

Public Comment (Agenda Items) – Jeff Miggins asked for clarification on Ordinance 2021-19 being voted on tonight.

Solicitor’s Report – Solicitor Goudsouzian stated he had two items for discussion; he then explained what they were. Laurel Hills Townhome Development will be a planned community, a series of townhomes where they have a series of declarations, rules and regulations within the community. As part of the requirements for the development they have to provide us with a series of declarations. He had an opportunity to review them and found them to be acceptable, customary, and appropriate. Mr. James made a motion to accept the declaration of Laurel Hills as presented and for it to be approved once it is in its final format. Motion was seconded by Ms. Jones Brown. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

The second item was the Pre-construction Agreement. Often before they are really ready to move forward, they like to do certain work, for example grading. Traditionally a municipality will allow the developer to do some preliminary work, however, they do so at their own risk and at

their own cost. If they do anything they have to redo, they have to do it on their own and it's called a Pre-construction Agreement. In this case it would be limited to grading; eventually they will be doing a retaining wall but at this point they cannot do the retaining wall, at all; it would strictly be grading and moving dirt. At this point the Borough would authorize signing the Pre-construction Agreement which would allow the developer to do preliminary grading only upon the signing of the Pre-construction Agreement and the developer posting the requisite security as outlined in the Improvements Agreement. They have to secure, put up a bond for the entire amount before they can go ahead and start. We want the bond there for liability purposes and otherwise. Mr. Mammana made a motion to have Council President Dees sign the Pre-construction Agreement only after the developer has met all the requirements in the Pre-construction Agreement as well as posted the bond pursuant to the Improvements Agreement. Motion seconded by Mr. James. Discussion was had. Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Lezzer stated he is looking forward to doing this development in West Easton Borough and feels it should be a nice addition to the Borough.

Engineer Report – None

Office Report – None

Sewer Report – Mr. James reported that the EAJSA plant is running well. With the pipe leaking in the Lehigh River, they are in the planning stage of deciding what to do about it. They have once again had issues with mop heads and rags in the sewer. The pumps are not designed to pump these kinds of items. The pumps are designed to grind things up, but do not work on mop heads, rags, etc. They just turn into a big stringy mess. It blocks the lines up and makes a mess. The only thing that should be flushed down the drain is what is supposed to go there.

Ordinances, Resolutions and Policies – Mr. Mammana made a motion to approve Ordinance 2021-19, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF WEST EASTON, COUNTY OF NORTHAMPTON, TO REGULATE THE PARKING OF TRAILERS AND THE TARPING OF VEHICLES ON PUBLIC STREETS; INCORPORATING CHAPTER 10 “HEALTH AND SAFETY”, PART 3, “PARKING AND STORAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLES,” SECTIONS 301 - 304 INTO CHAPTER 15 “MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC”; REPEALING CHAPTER 10 “HEALTH AND SAFETY”, PART 3, “PARKING AND STORAGE OF MOTOR VEHICLES,” SECTIONS 305 TO 307; AND AMENDING SECTION 305 OF “MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC,” RELATING TO PENALTIES; seconded by Ms. Jones Brown. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

President’s Report – Mr. Dees stated that:

-with the easing of pandemic restrictions, the borough will be trying to catch-up on delayed projects, such as the Public Works Building, Monument Park, and other planned improvements.
-we have been fortunate in that our weakness of not having a large tax revenue from businesses, allowed the borough to survive without a huge revenue shortfall, as other surrounding communities have reported. Of the businesses that did deal with the public, the borough worked with them to see that they survived.

-Dubs on 5th is an example of the borough working with, rather than hindering their survival. At the beginning of the pandemic, our existing zoning prevented Dubs from having outside dining. However, the pandemic guidelines provided the borough latitude to help businesses survive the crisis. They were guided through the process of submitting an application for a temporary permit

to allow them outside dining. Dubs has policed the outside area at the end of each business day, has followed the hours of outside dining allowed, and there have been no noise complaints.

- the biggest hit to revenue has been the loss of resident fees collected from the County Work Release Facility located on Main Street. It seems that the County will no longer be using the facility to house those in the Work Release Program.

-On Palmer Street, a large section of land is scheduled to be developed into the Laurel Hills Development with plans to build several homes; the developer is in the process of obtaining permits and other requirements to build a number of homes. This should eventually bring in added revenue for the Borough.

- on the Public Works building, Council will have to make a decision on whether we move forward with our original plan of a facility with heat, plumbing, and gas service, or to scale it back to a basic storage facility for our vehicles and equipment.

- it is time for Council to start addressing the state of disrepair with some sidewalks and curbs in our borough. He asked the Property & Roads Committee to find the worst of them for Council to consider a course of action to be taken at the next Council Meeting Executive Session. They either need to be repaired or replaced.

Police Chief's Report – Chief Mahady said he talked to approximately 17-18 children at Gross Park. They said they did not know anything about the litter and trash being dumped all over the park. Ms. Jones Brown asked about the straps for the speed signs. Chief Mahady said he will get that situation figured out.

Mayor's Report - Mayor DePaul reported that:

-he agrees there are bad sidewalks and curbs; some are impassable.

-UGI has started to patch and pave Center and 10th Streets. He has a call into the UGI supervisor to see what they are planning to do.

-he will set up a meeting with Wilson Borough to discuss Center and Low from Freemansburg Avenue.

-he would like to see something in writing about handicap parking spots.

-the swings should be up at the parks.

Round Table – Council President Dees said he would like Mayor DePaul to be in charge of the Neighborhood Block Watch since he and his late wife, Sandy, had previously started the Block Watch program in West Easton Borough; everyone agreed.

-Ms. Jones Brown thanked Mayor DePaul for helping out a resident when they needed help having their lawn mowed; she mentioned Mary Meuser Memorial Library's summer reading program.

-Mr. James mentioned that he attended the May 4th Scholarship Committee meeting where two residents were selected to receive scholarships to help with college expenses. Their next meeting is planned for March 10, 2022. They plan to have a Tricky Tray at the Halloween Parade.

-Mayor DePaul said that years ago the Neighborhood Block Watch had a clothing drive and raised approximately \$1,000 for the Scholarship Committee.

-Mr. Decker, Jr., offered to clean up the 1998 plaque at Gross Park. He looked into getting a holiday tree. Mr. Dees said that trees planted there have died because the ground is ash and cinder from the railroad incline; it would need fertilizer. Mr. Decker, Jr. offered to help Dane clean out the storm drains that seem full.

Committee Reports

Business and Finance Committee – None

Property and Roads Committee – Mr. Klaver believes the garbage trucks are staining roads. He asked about the streetlight he proposed. Mayor DePaul provided an update. Chief Mahady asked about putting temporary speed bumps in Spring Street Alley. Meeting was set for May 17th at 6pm at Gross Park.

Public Safety and Personnel Committee – Met on April 29th, 5:45pm to discuss options to combat vandalism and littering at Gross Park. Discussed traffic fines and Block Watch Program. Safety Committee is recommending installing surveillance cameras with night vision capability at Gross Park. Mr. James made a motion to approve getting an estimate for a surveillance system at Gross Park near the basketball and playground area; seconded by Ms. Jones Brown. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0. Meeting was scheduled for June 1st, 5:30pm at Borough Hall.

Legal and Technology Committee – None

Utilities and Fire Committee – Mr. James said there are plans to fix the fire horn. The Fire Company is in the process of separating from Safety First Social Club. They are still working on sewer rates, doing research and development. Meeting scheduled for May 20th, 6pm at Borough Hall.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Ms. Jones Brown reported that:

- going forward the swings should be up by Easter.
- she appreciated the volunteers that came out to help with the Community Clean-up Day.
- she was disappointed to see a lot of littering and graffiti in the following days.
- the Memorial Day Remembrance will be held on May 31st at 9am; due to Covid there will be no refreshments.
- she appreciated the office organizing the Memorial Day event and keeping in touch with her.
- the Committee did some touch-up to the drain paintings. She'd love to have more volunteers to help with the painting and upkeep of the drains.
- they need more donations of painted rocks.
- they plan on having an in-person Art in the Park event, hopefully in August.

Ms. Jones Brown made a motion to purchase supplies for a United States flag mural with the cost not to exceed \$250; seconded by Mr. James. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0. The plan is to work on the mural at the end of June.

A flower bed project will take place at Borough Hall.
Next meeting will discuss Young Lungs at Play.

Mr. Dees mentioned what a fantastic job Ms. Jones Brown is doing with the Parks and Recreation Committee since she has been on Council.

Grants and Public Relations Committee – None

Unfinished Business – Mr. Dees asked Mr. Decker, Jr. if he had any updates on his research into a full-time police department. Mr. Decker, Jr. replied that he had reached out to 2 mayors in neighboring communities, and he plans on visiting their police departments to see how they do things.

New Business – Mr. James asked if they could start thinking about holding Council meetings at Borough Hall again, down the road.

Public Comment (Open) – Leon Stull, 2nd Street:

-stated that the trouble seen with the garbage trucks is that there is water in the containers from people leaving their cans sit out and when the trash is compacted, the “juice” runs out. He said it is water running out, not oil.

-asked Chief Mahady if any tickets are being given out on Main Street from people running the stop sign.

-remarked that he has not seen any grates lifted and cleaned.

-asked about trailers hooked to a truck, will that be an issue. Chief Mahady said the ordinance is for unhitched trailers.

-asked about why a friend did not get the senior citizen discount; he was informed only homeowners who live in the home receive the discount. His friend is not the homeowner.

Mr. James made a motion to extend the Advanced Disposal/Waste Management contract another year based on our original contract; seconded by Mr. Mammana. Discussion was had. Motion passed 7-0.

Executive Session Entered 8:14pm – Exited 8:45pm

Council discussed legal matters.

Motion made by Mr. James to authorize Solicitor to take appropriate action to remedy violations at property adjacent to 805 Ridge Street property; seconded by Mr. Mammana. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

Mr. Mammana made a motion to approve Solicitor to enter amounts due to the Borough by placing liens on properties with balances over \$700; seconded by Mr. James. No discussion. Motion passed 7-0.

-Upon motion by Mr. James; seconded by Ms. Jones Brown, no discussion, Council voted to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Joan Heebner, Secretary/Manager
