

## **Langhorne Borough Council Meeting**

**April 14, 2021**

A meeting of the Langhorne Borough Council was held Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. as a hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting in Council Chambers. President Thomas called the meeting to order and invited those in attendance to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: President Kari Thomas, Vice President Scott Haldeman, Councilwomen Kathleen Horwatt and Kristen Farry, Councilmen Rich Mason, Paul Murdock and Anthony Marfia, Police Chief John Godzieba, Borough Manager/Secretary Christine Schoell, Treasurer Ellyn Schoen, and Solicitor Catherine Anne Porter. Absent was: Mayor Joseph Taylor.

After President Thomas called the meeting to order, Police Chief Godzieba requested an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Council moved to the Borough Hall Office to hold the Executive Session.

**Executive Session:** Started at 7:33 p.m.

**Executive Session:** Ended at 7:44 p.m.

**Public Comment:** Paul Schneider of 233 N. Bellevue Ave. addressed Council regarding the fire siren and its importance in alerting volunteer firefighters and allowing them to respond quickly to emergency calls.

Beverly Adams of 118 W. Richardson Ave. agreed that the siren should be kept due to its helpfulness in alerting the firefighters in the Borough and surrounding areas. Ms. Adams was also concerned about the Borough's overall safety having heard about an increase in crime and being unable to easily accessible public record of crimes in the area. She suggested that local crimes should be reported on the Borough website.

Rudy Taurino of 317 Station Ave. asked about a flyer he received in his mailbox and asked if there was any evidence to support the comments made about recent Borough events. President Thomas indicated that Chief Godzieba would address the matter later in the meeting and that such matters were often outlined in the Chief's report, which is included in the monthly minutes of each meeting.

Tyler Murphy of 141 E. Marshall Ave. thought that rapid changes in technology made the siren obsolete and an unnecessary source of sound. He suggested renaming Borough Hall in honor of the late Councilman and Firefighter Bill Meredith. Mr. Murphy proposed holding a celebration in the summer when more people are vaccinated to bring the community together.

With regard to the siren, President Thomas suggested that the Borough analyze data sent from the Fire Company regarding responses to the siren. In her view, the siren was a small price to pay to support the people who volunteer to serve as firefighters. Despite his past requests, the Fire Company had not provided Councilman Murdock with the monthly data. Based on an informal survey, Councilman Murdock reported that roughly two thirds of Borough residents supported the siren and a third did not. Solicitor Porter noted that the question of the siren could not be placed on ballot, though the Borough could conduct a formal survey.

Councilman Mason suggested that the Borough follow the example of municipalities who had siren manufacturers found liable for false alarms. Vice President Haldeman had discussed with Councilman Mason improving the radio presence to help the fire department and suggested erecting a radio antenna to help strengthen radio communications.

Councilman Marfia was concerned that some people who oppose the siren may be reluctant to voice their opinions. Councilwoman Farry was concerned over the amount of time spent at Council meetings discussing complaints about the Borough posted on social media, which did not necessarily representative of the public's views of the Borough. She did not want to inconvenience volunteer firefighters by having them come to monthly Council meetings to provide data when many of them had full-time jobs and families. Councilwoman Horwatt agreed that attention should not be given to social media complaints at Council meetings.

**Chief's Report:** Chief Godzieba reported that there was one adult criminal arrest for DUI in March, and an ongoing investigation of a commercial burglary on Pine Street. He was back on full duty after his injury during an earlier snowstorm. The Chief discussed the flyer previously mentioned by Rudy Taurino and indicated that much of what was on the flyer was exaggerated or false and that several of the incidents were unreported and not known to people allegedly involved. Chief Godzieba reported that there were not many police calls in the Borough and that the crime rate was low. He commended how well the Borough's officers worked with people to diffuse troublesome situations. There was discussion of the methods of deliver of the flyer, some getting it directly and some in their mailboxes. Councilman Murdock also refuted the claims about crime on the flyer; noting that there had been very few major crimes in the Borough over the past several years. He praised the Borough's police officers quick responses to calls.

Chief Godzieba also reported that the intersection cameras were installed but that they would require specific maintenance to work at full efficiency, such as by cutting back the trees that block their view.

Chief Godzieba provided information on a website ([ucr.pa.gov](http://ucr.pa.gov)) that can be used to view a crime map of Langhorne Borough, but which only included crimes for which police reports were filed. While appreciating the information, Beverly Adams preferred that all crimes, and not just those with filed reports, were reported on the Borough website. President Thomas and Chief Godzieba assured her that Borough crime rates were still very low.

**Mayor's Report:** None.

**Manager's Report:** Manager Schoell reported that Hough Associates, the Borough's recycling monitor, advised that after the post-audit of the 2019 recycling grant, the DEP awarded the Borough \$14,640; an approx. \$5,000 increase from 2018. She also reported that the Borough may be awarded \$156,211 in COVID recovery money by the Bucks County Commissioners. No information on specific restrictions on spending was provided. In response to Vice President Haldeman's question, Manager Schoell advised that the monetary allocation was based on the municipality's population and was specifically for municipalities with less than 50,000 residents.

Manager Schoell reported that the Borough received \$37,233.20 in 2021 Liquid Fuels funds. An updated proposal for painting of the crosswalks and stop bars at three intersections in the Borough was requested from Armour & Sons. While Council approved a proposal last year, inclement weather prevented the work. Councilwoman Horwatt expressed hope that the work be completed before the Memorial Day Parade and requested that Council pre-approve their proposal provided the work did not exceed \$8,000.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Murdock, Council voted unanimously to approve payment, not to exceed \$8,000, to Armour & Sons to repaint the crosswalks and stop bars at three intersections.

The LBBA submitted a Special Events Request for Concerts in the Park at Richardson House Park from June 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>, from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. The amplifier will be turned off by 9:00 p.m. The LBBA will supply porta-potties until August 31st. The LBBA also submitted a Special Events Request for the Annual Car Show on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. They signed the COVID-19 Regulations & Restrictions form for both events. President Thomas advised that the events may not be held if anything changed with COVID restrictions.

Cub Master Marc Lewis of Cub Scout Pack 19 submitted a request to hold their 2<sup>nd</sup> campout at the Heritage Farm, with 40 participants & 20 tents expected. They also submitted the required paperwork. State Representative Frank Farry will be holding his Annual Free Community Shredding Event on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Maple Square parking lot.

Manager Schoell advised that PECO would be replacing a gas main on E. Richardson Ave. which crosses Pine St. on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Residents will still be able to use the roadways. HomeServe will be sending out information within the next few months to Borough residents who did not previously sign up for coverage for water and sewer lines.

President Thomas and Manager Schoell have been working to modernize the Borough website and asked Council to look at it to make sure that all of the links worked properly. While there had been a few minor glitches on the new site, Manager Schoell will work with residents to make sure they get their proper documentation. She and President Thomas encouraged comments in order to improve the website and make sure it worked as intended.

Zoning Hearing Board Applications were submitted for 317 Station Ave. and 128 W. Maple Ave. The hearings are scheduled in Chambers at Borough Hall on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.

**Engineer's Report:** None.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilwoman Farry, Council voted unanimously to approve the March 2021 Council Minutes, as revised by the Solicitor.

**Approval of the Treasurer's Report:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilwoman Farry, Council voted unanimously to approve the March 2021 Treasurer's Report.

### **Approval of the Bills:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilman Mason seconded by Councilman Murdock, Council voted unanimously to approve payment of the April bills.

**EAC:** Councilman Mason stated that the next EAC meeting was scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup>, but due to a lack of quorum, he was trying to postpone it to April 22<sup>nd</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **HARB Report:** HARB reviewed the following applications:

Alyson George	151 E. Richardson	Install a red cedar fence on the property.
Kristen Waskie	123 W. Maple	Install a wooden fence at the back of the property.
Joseph Lucas	123 S. Bellevue	Replacement of flat roof.
Antoine Lovelace	116 N. Bellevue	Install a 2'x3' sign of teal, white, and black.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilman Mason seconded by Vice President Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to approve the April 2021 HARB recommendations.

Councilman Murdock mentioned a giant lawn decoration of a rooster on Winchester Ave. He noted that people who owned historic homes often had their plans held up by HARB and yet the rooster was put up without review or permits. Councilman Murdock also noted that the rooster was mounted on a stump that may be too close to the road. It was suggested that HARB consider addressing yard decorations.

**Farm/LOSI:** Pat Carr reported that LOSI would not hold its annual Spring Flea Market and Jazz at the Farm due to COVID pandemic concerns. Mr. Carr reported that the community gardens near the Farm were off to an excellent start and that it was another sellout season. Farm Spruce Up Day was scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup>, 9 a.m. to noon, with mulch being donated and delivered by Shady Brook Farm. The Farm will still host a Barn Sale, on a much smaller scale than the flea market. The Cub Scouts will hold a campout and outdoor movie for the kids on April 24<sup>th</sup>, starting at dusk.

Pat Carr reported that the Heritage Farm's equipment needed repairs and praised Rudy Taurino for helping to repair the equipment; that there were enough summer volunteers to cut all the spaces around the Farm; and, that ever since the Borough acquired Catawissa, LOSI had donated to the Borough the amount in property taxes for Catawissa if it had been sold.

**Planning Commission:** None.

**Recreation Board:** Councilwoman Horwatt reported that the community service program had been up and running for two weeks and that the Rotary Club would mulch the Mayor's Playground on Saturday for their day of service in preparation of holding the Pet Fair. If possible, the memorial tree for the late Lucille Messina would be planted the same day. This tree was being selected by Jeff Bartlett and installed for free by staff from Big Oak Tree Service Because some trees at the Heritage Farm needed to be replaced, Councilwoman Horwatt told Pat Carr that the Borough often got its trees through the Shade Tree Commission, which got them from Feeney's. Weather permitting, the Recreation Board would do an Adopt-a-Highway with the Rotary Club on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Councilwoman Horwatt ordered 21 new flags because the ones on Pine St. were damaged by wind. Road Technician Schoell would put them up.



**Shade Tree Commission:** Councilman Murdock reported that the Shade Tree Commission met and decided to replace around 16 trees in the Borough. He asked that he or Shade Tree be informed if anyone knew of significant old trees that should be preserved or have a plaque made for. Councilman Marfia asked if Shade Tree ever looked at trees in the Borough that might be dangerous or at risk of falling over. Councilman Murdock explained that Shade Tree only got involved if trees obstruct the right of way on roads. Councilwoman Horwatt reminded all that the list of tree locations was to be presented to Council with property owner's permission prior to ordering the trees

**Public Comment:** Geraldine Marfia of 224 S. Bellevue Ave. noted that a tree near the Dunn-Givnish Funeral Home might need attention. Councilman Murdock stated that he would look at it. Mrs. Marfia also agreed that people should raise their concerns at Council meetings and not on social media.

**Solicitor's Report:** While Councilman Murdock was satisfied with the revisions to the Stormwater Ordinance, he did not think it was well received. Vice President Haldeman did not think it was a good time to impose a new fee due to the pandemic and that the Borough could cover the stormwater costs with money from the Covid Relief Fund. Solicitor Porter suggested that Council pass the Ordinance but not the Resolution setting fees. In her analysis of the tax parcel map, President Thomas found that of the 497 unique parcels, that 1 was industrial, 50 were commercial, and the remaining 446 were residential. She suggested charging each parcel a flat rate, regardless of the number of units or their mixed use. She suggested charges of \$100 for industrial, \$28 for residential, and \$75 for commercial, which would raise \$16,338, surpassing the \$15,000 the Borough budgeted. Councilwoman Farry and Treasurer Schoen agreed that doing the fees that way would simplify the process while still covering the Borough's costs. Vice President Haldeman stated that he had already surveyed some Borough properties to determine the number of units. Councilman Murdock recommended adopting the ordinance as written with the charges for additional units, but not enacting the fee resolution at this time. Council agreed to postpone passing the resolution until January, 2022.

**Motion:** On motion of Vice President Haldeman seconded by Councilman Murdock, Council voted to pass the Stormwater Ordinance as written, with President Thomas and Councilwoman Farry opposed.

Councilman Murdock suggested having a Community Day in the Borough in which all boards and committees meet up in order to talk to people. President Thomas and Councilwoman Farry commended the idea.

**Adjournment:** With no other business, on motion of Vice President Haldeman seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the April 2021 Council Meeting at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christine Schoell  
Borough Secretary