

Langhorne Borough Council Meeting
December 13, 2023

A Langhorne Borough Council Meeting was held at Council Chambers on Wednesday, December 13, 2023. President Murdock called the session to order at 7:37 p.m. and invited those in attendance to pledge allegiance to the Flag.

IN ATTENDANCE: President Paul Murdock; Vice President Rich Mason; Councilpersons Tony Marfia, Nancy Culleton, Kathleen Horwatt, Scott Haldeman, and Kristen Farry; Mayor Joe Taylor; Solicitor David Truelove; Police Chief John Godzieba; Treasurer Ellyn Schoen; Manager Steve Bradshaw.

Councilperson Farry left the meeting at approximately 9:47 p.m. Mayor Taylor left the meeting at approximately 10:06 p.m.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Taylor commented on some work that PECO was doing, including removing part of a sidewalk. He also thanked the Borough Council and Personnel Committee for their work on the police contract.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT: See attached document.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRESENTATIONS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Beth Delaney, 119 West Marshall Avenue, asked about the rule for recycling in the Borough and what number plastics were recyclable. Councilperson Horwatt explained what is and is not allowed. The Borough Manager will call Leck tomorrow and put a posting out on social media regarding recycling rules.

Rudy Taurino, 317 Station Avenue, complained about his neighbor parking a class 6 vehicle across from him. He said that the vehicle is leaking hydraulic oil and creating a narrow chokepoint on the street. He requested that the Borough ask his neighbor to pull the vehicle into his driveway. Mayor Taylor stated that he believes that commercial vehicles cannot be parked in the roadway. He asked that the Borough contact the neighbor and inform him of the relevant ordinance regarding commercial vehicles. Councilperson Culleton asked if the Borough has an ordinance addressing the environmental consequences of the leaking oil. Chief Godzieba added that he cannot cite the neighbor if there is no sign prohibiting parking vehicles above a certain weight on the street, but he could advise him of the ordinance. Councilperson Horwatt asked if the sign could be put at the entrance to the Borough, and Chief Godzieba replied that the sign must be on the street. He said he would send the letter first.

Chris Blaydon, 245 W. Maple Ave., informed Council that there are two lights on Pine St. that are LED lights, while the rest of the lights are not. He asked that the LED lights be replaced with softer lights to match the rest of the street. President Murdock said that the issue was that they were switching to LED lights and there were spare LEDs in the basement which they were trying to use before buying new ones. Councilperson Horwatt suggested that since the LEDs don't have any glass, Armour & Sons could put tinted glass over the lights to tone them down.

Mr. Blaydon also informed Council that the Daughters of the American Revolution wish to place a bench in the Revolutionary War burial site. It will cost about \$900 dollars, with no cost to the Borough. It will include cement pads and will have a plaque commemorating those who served. His research had revealed that the DAR is now a much more diverse organization than in the past. It has a non-discrimination policy and seeks to identify African-American and Native American Revolutionary War patriots.

ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Country Club Lane: At its October 2023 meeting, Council authorized the Solicitor's office to proceed with preparing documentation for roadway dedication. All of the signatures, but one, have been obtained. Legal descriptions for the Country Club Ln. right-of-way, and snow storage easements affecting two parcels, are drafted for the Borough Solicitor's use as exhibits.

141-151 West Maple Avenue Minor Subdivision: An extension was submitted by the applicant extending the timeline for Council to render a decision on the application through December 31st, 2023. At the November 29th, 2023 continued session of the November 15, 2023 meeting, the Planning Commission voted to recommend denial of the application unless an extension and requested information are provided. The Borough Manager provided a copy of the document submitted by the Knights requesting a waiver of the time limitation, therefore there is no need to vote on it until the Borough Engineer receives revised plans.

Route 413 Storm Inlets and East Watson Avenue Crossing: PennDOT maintains the position that milling and repaving are scheduled to commence in the Spring of 2024. The grant application for repairing the storm inlets was submitted to the Bucks County Redevelopment Authority. Their board meeting is Friday, December 15th. CKS staff were on-site Thursday, December 7th, 2023 performing a field survey of the E. Watson Ave. intersection to prepare preliminary design drawings for the crosswalk. Mr. DiPersio presented Council with a revised version of a drawing. There was a request to include a crossing at all four intersections, but CKS is not suggesting it because of cost and time concerns, as well as the possibility of traffic sitting in the middle of the crossing.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: Councilperson Haldeman felt that the placement of the crosswalk was not intuitive for pedestrians. Mr. DiPersio said that the driveway was not as close to it as it appears in the conceptual rendering. He also suggested that speaker boxes could be added. Councilperson Haldeman, after examining the rendering, noted that the ramps could not be put at the intersection because of the drains. Mr. DiPersio pointed out the location of the inlets on the rendering and the difficulty of placing ramps for the crosswalk in those places. LS Land Construction, LLC is scheduled to remove the inlet grates on Thursday, December 14th, 2023 and will clean the inlet boxes using a leaf vacuum allowing for observation and evaluation of existing conditions by CKS staff. Mr. DiPersio said that they may not be able to pull all 13 inlets, and that after the work is done a report will be prepared for Council.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: Councilperson Horwatt asked if, in the event that there was a problem lifting the grate, the operation would be stopped. Mr. DiPersio said that according to PennDOT, there are 4 to 5 safety grates on hand in case of failure. If there is a pavement failure, PennDOT can provide a temporary steel plate. If it does not go well, CKS will not try to force the matter.

Crestwood – Bellevue Avenue Residential Development Project: The first Zoning Hearing Board session was on August 30th, 2023, continued to November 30th, 2023. Toll's primary witness on November 30th was Jeffrey Madden, PE, of ESE Consultants. The hearing will continue on Monday,

December 18th, 2023 at the American Legion Soby Post. Planning Commission is recommending Council consider changes to uses permitted in the PS (Professional Services) zoning district to protect parcels on the east side of Pine Street from potential higher density residential development. The recommendations were prepared with the support of BCPC, TCA and CKS. These changes would make the district more restrictive. An option that proposes the fewest number of changes was recommended.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: President Murdock asked if it would be easier to change the Professional Services to R1 or R2. Mr. DiPersio said that it would allow for more uses, like office and institutional. Councilperson Culleton asked if the proposed changes would apply to the whole PS zoning district, and Mr. DiPersio confirmed this is the case. President Murdock asked if Toll would have to abide by the new changes if it is passed. Mr. DiPersio said that they can operate under what was in place at the time of application. A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) overlay ordinance and an “Ideal Development Buildout Plan” have been drafted under consideration by the Zoning Board. While the overlay would not be applicable to the Toll application, it offers an option for potential compromise, depending on the outcome of the zoning hearing. Design Guidelines are also being prepared to supplement the overlay. Councilperson Culleton asked what the next step would be if it was decided that Council will hold an advertised public hearing before voting on adoption of the amendment. Councilperson Haldeman said that he supports everything except for the reference to duplexes. He said that it isn’t clear whether the definition refers to side-by-side or stacked duplexes, and that he does not like the idea of stacked duplexes. He suggested specifying side-by-side only. CKS’ concern is that if they allow duplexes, they could end up with all duplexes on the site. They could change the TND later to allow some side-by-side duplexes, but not stacked. President Murdock suggested that Council have a vote on the Planning Commission’s recommended changes ready for the January 10th meeting. Solicitor Truelove said they could do it even earlier, having a motion to advertise the zoning changes on the special meeting on the 28th. Councilperson Haldeman asked if the language of the ordinance should be changed to allow side-by-side duplexes if they are allowed in the overlay. Mr. DiPersio clarified that, if Council was going to pursue these changes to make the PS district more restrictive, they could amend the definition of duplexes. The only risk, as pointed out by the Bucks County Planning Commission, is that if there are existing over-under duplexes, those properties could become non-conforming uses. Solicitor Truelove suggested that Council have an amendment that is made up of multiple items, and therefore include multiple things in the same advertisement.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Haldeman, seconded by Councilperson Marfia, Council voted unanimously to approve the 2024 budget.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: Councilperson Horwatt asked for clarification on the process for duty tow permits. Treasurer Schoen replied that the duty tows came in 2022 or 2023, so they will be there next year. Police Chief Godzieba said that they were collected in December of last year, and that there are checks being held till January 2nd, which will be given to the Treasurer. Councilperson Culleton noted that the real estate transfer tax is lower in the proposed budget than in 2023 by \$6,000, and asked why it was reduced. Treasurer Schoen said that the interest rates and real estate market environment would not produce the same numbers as last year.

MOTION: On motion of Vice President Mason, seconded by Councilperson Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve advertisement of the 2024 Tax ordinance.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: President Murdock clarified that, with the reapportionment of 1.7 mills from the General Fund to the Street Light Fund, Council must advertise the tax ordinance even though the total

millage will not change. President Murdock then said that the special meeting on the 28th would be to hear public comment on the ordinance and approve it. Treasurer Schoen said that residents pay a millage for street lights. The Street Light Fund came up short in 2023 so \$12,000 was borrowed from the General Fund. The only way to get that back is to up the street light millage and repay the General Fund. The General Fund millage will be decreased accordingly. This will even out so there is no tax increase.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Haldeman, seconded by Councilperson Farry, Council voted unanimously to hold a vote to advertise Ordinance 2024 - xx, establishing a volunteer service credit program, at the special meeting on December 28th.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: President Murdock clarified that the ordinance specifies an earned income tax, only for volunteer firefighters who are residents of the Borough and not to exceed \$500 per firefighter. He said that according to the Fire Chief, if this were retroactively passed tonight, it would apply to six people currently, and for next year it would be five. Councilperson Farry said that since there is only one fire company, Langhorne-Middletown Fire Company, the references to Station 21 and Station 22 should be struck out for clarity. Councilperson Horwatt clarified that the ordinance applies only to the Borough's EIT. Solicitor Truelove asked about the time frame and how long it takes to establish a volunteer's eligibility. Treasurer Schoen replied that the volunteer firefighters will get the tax credit on their income tax return at the end of the year, and that they are eligible if they live in the Borough and file a tax return from January to June. President Murdock suggested that the ordinance should say that eligibility is from January 1st 2024 to November 1st 2024, and Solicitor Truelove added that it should specify the same period for each subsequent year. Council further discussed the language and content in the ordinance, including who is eligible, who the applicants should send their applications to, and how the tax credit is applied.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Haldeman, seconded by Councilperson Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve a 3-year extension to the Police Chief's contract.

DISCUSSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE: Councilperson Culleton announced that the Committee had received several applications for the Human Relations Commission. She requested that the deadline for applications be extended to the end of the year, and that this be announced on the Borough website and Facebook. Council agreed to this. Councilperson Culleton said that the accepted applicants would be appointed no later than February, and possibly January 10th.

DISCUSSION ON 2024 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE: Council decided that the office holiday schedule will consist of the following 8 holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Farry, seconded by Councilperson Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the as-discussed holiday schedule to include 8 holidays.

The motion to approve adopting Middletown Township's Federal Holiday Schedule, made by Councilperson Farry and seconded by Councilperson Culleton, was retracted.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

- The Reorganization checklist was sent out to everyone. The Reorganization meeting will be January 2nd at 7:30 p.m.

- The 2024 Municipal Directory will be sent out. There are several items on it that need to be addressed.
- There is a bootcamp for new officials in Horsham from January 26th to January 27th. The cost is \$125 a person. Manager Bradshaw requested a motion to send the new Council members.
- Permission to hire Gabe Tenaglia as Borough Clerk is required. Solicitor Truelove said Council should make a motion to amend the agenda to include the vote.
- Trash day for the weeks of December 25th and January 1st will be on Thursday.
- Armour & Sons is aware of all the street lights that are out. Manager Bradshaw was in contact with them, and they will be working on the lights shortly.
- PennDOT will repave Maple Avenue from Pine Street to Flowers Mill Road. There is currently no set date.

MOTION: On motion of Vice President Mason, seconded by Councilperson Culleton, Council voted unanimously to approve sending two new Council members to the PSAB New Officials Bootcamp for \$125 each.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: Council reviewed the Council Meeting Schedule and made revisions.

Councilperson Culleton suggested using the work session on January 25th as an orientation for the new Councilmembers on the workings of Langhorne Borough Council that is open to the public.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Haldeman, seconded by Councilperson Marfia, Council voted unanimously to approve the revised 2024 Council Meeting Schedule.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Culleton, seconded by Councilperson Horwatt, Council voted 6 to 0 to amend the agenda to include the hiring of Gabe Tenaglia as Borough Clerk. Councilperson Farry was not present.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Haldeman, seconded by Councilperson Culleton, Council voted 6 to 0 to hire Gabe Tenaglia as Borough Clerk which will be ratified in the Dec 28th Special Council Meeting. Councilperson Farry was not present.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: Councilperson Horwatt said that there is a form that newly elected people have to fill out, and which must be notarized. Manager Bradshaw said that he will get it out to the new Council members as soon as it is ready.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: No report.

COMMITTEE, BOARD & COMMISSION REPORTS:

Environmental Advisory Council: Vice President Mason reported that the EAC has made progress in getting an EV charger, but they were holding off for various reasons, including quality issues with the chargers, issues that Middletown Township had in getting a charger, and the fact that vandals cut the cords to steal their copper.

Fire Company: No report.

HARB: No report.

Heritage Farm/L.O.S.I.: No report.

Planning Commission: No report.

Recreation Board: No report.

Shade Tree Commission: Councilperson Culleton reported that the Shade Tree Commission is nearly ready to send out the Tree City application for 2023.

Communications Team: Councilperson Culleton reported that they have not yet sent out the advertisement on Facebook asking for ideas for the Borough motto. The Communications Team is still figuring out the details.

MOTION: On motion of Vice President Mason, seconded by Councilperson Culleton, Council voted 6 to 0 to approve the sign permit for 178 A North Pine Street. Councilperson Farry was not present.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Adam Temk, of Designer Game Rooms at 178 A North Pine Street, explained the work that had been done on its sign, which was taking their sign down, removing the vinyl, and putting it back up.

MOTION: On motion of Councilperson Horwatt, seconded by Councilperson Haldeman, Council voted 6 to 0 to approve the Council Meeting minutes from October 11 and the Work Session minutes from October 26. Councilperson Farry was not present.

MOTION: On motion of Vice President Mason, seconded by Councilperson Horwatt, Council voted 6 to 0 to approve the Treasurer's report. Councilperson Farry was not present.

MOTION: On motion of Vice President Mason, seconded by Councilperson Haldeman, Council voted 6 to 0 to approve payment of the bills. Councilperson Farry was not present.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Councilperson Horwatt told Council that she had worked with the Borough's social media manager Mary Zimmerman to decorate Chambers. Mary finished the decorations herself.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion of Councilperson Culleton, seconded by Councilperson Haldeman, Council voted 6 to 0 to adjourn at 10:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Bradshaw, Borough Manager / Secretary

Next Council Meeting: January 10, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.