

**Langhorne Borough Council Meeting
February 10, 2021**

A meeting of the Langhorne Borough Council was held on February 10, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. President Thomas called the meeting to order and invited everyone in attendance to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Announcements and Presentations: None.

Public Comment: William Haughney of Quakertown thanked Council and the others involved for their efforts helping to resolve the issues which arose when his neighbor erected a fence on his N. Pine Street property. In response to Mr. Haughney's concerns about fences in the open space areas (the bamboo field and the meadow property) in the rear of the property, President Thomas and Solicitor Porter assured him that, although there were still applicable open space restrictions regulating the new fencing which were managed by L.O.S.I, it was on open space property which was owned by the neighbor and by not the Borough. Mr. Haughney asked that L.O.S.I. review the use of stockade fencing and require that split-rail fencing be installed on the open space portion of the property. The Borough will review the issue with L.O.S.I.

Treasurer Schoen thanked Council and the Borough Police for their professionalism in their handling of the recent snowstorm.

Councilwoman Horwatt wanted to recognize the passing of Maryanne Barnes and recalled the many times Ms. Barnes helped Council, her role as a councilperson and community leader and that she would be greatly missed.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Taylor reported that the handling and response to the snow emergency worked out well and that most residents kept their vehicles off the streets during the last snow storm even though no snow emergency was declared. In the future people who leave their cars in the streets during a snow emergency will risk being towed. Councilman Marfia expressed concerns that people plowing snow from their driveways into the streets were creating vehicle hazards. President Thomas asked that future incidents be reported to and handled by Borough Code Enforcement.

Chief's Report: Chief Godzieba noted the errors in his report regarding numbers for traffic citations and patrol hours and indicated he would submit a revised report. While on patrol on February 7th, the Chief observed that there were very few cars on the road. Chief Godzieba reported that most Borough police officers would have their 2nd Covid shot by the end of next week, that the Woods Services vaccination site would close on February 19th, and that the new sites would include the Lower Bucks Campus of Bucks County Community College.

Councilman Murdock asked Chief Godzieba to comment on the letter sent to Council concerning the Borough's Use of Force policies falling within the Police Chief's Association's guidelines. The Chief explained that it was not an accreditation but would enable the Borough, for the next three years, to apply for federal grants which required a police department to meet certain criteria for the use of force.

Manager's Report: Manager Schoell received only a few minor complaints regarding snow removal and noted that there were also several compliments from residents about how the snow clearing was handled. The Statement of Financial Interest forms distributed to Council must be completed by May 2021 and if completed online, a printed form must be provided to the Borough Office. Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority (BCWSA) sent an update for their fees and requirements for plumbers and contractors connecting to or exposing BCWSA water and/or sewer facilities. The update will be posted on the Borough's website. The Liquid Fuels Audit was completed with no adverse findings.

The Borough Auditor, Kevin Jensen of Bee Bergvall & Co., requested that the Borough complete the closing of the McGrath Construction escrow account, which was noted in the January 2020 Council Meeting Minutes. Manager Schoell, Treasurer Schoen, Councilwoman Horwatt and Solicitor Porter will work to put together a breakdown of the numbers for the project, a punch list of items not addressed and a final reconciliation.

The Bucks County Planning Commission (BCPC) has invited municipal officials to participate in a virtual meeting on March 4th regarding planning, mitigation, floodplain management, and disaster management.

Manager Schoell reported that the Borough received a Special Event Request form from the Langhorne Rotary Club for the Pet Fair & Family Fun Day for Saturday, August 28, 2021 from 8:00 a.m. to 4 p.m., which includes setup and cleanup times, with the rain date scheduled for Saturday, September 11, 2021. Councilwoman Horwatt stated that the rain date might be an issue due to the fact that it falls very close to Rosh Hashanah as well as Labor Day weekend as well as serving as the twenty-year anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks, so she suggested asking the Rotary Club to change that date to three weeks after the planned date instead of two. There were no objections from Council regarding the planned date of August 28.

The Langhorne Rotary Club submitted a Banner Request for the placement of the Pet Fair banners on Pine St. and Maple Ave. from August 7, 2021 to August 28, 2021. Council discussed banking requirements and the check signing and approval process.

Engineer's Report: None.

Approval of the Minutes:

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Farry seconded by Councilwoman Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the January 13, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes, as revised by the Solicitor.

Approval of the Treasurer's Report:

Motion: On motion of Councilman Murdock seconded by Councilwoman Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Approval of the Bills:

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

EAC: Councilman Mason reported that the EAC met on January 21st to try and reword the stormwater management fee ordinance as discussed at last month's Council meeting. As it is difficult to have a quorum with only four members, he asked President Thomas to appoint more members. The EAC thought it was important that Borough residents understand that one of the main motivations for passage of the ordinance was the costs required to comply with both state and federal regulations. They recommended changing the term "base rate" to "residential rate" to make it easier to understand and revising the definition of "non-residential" to make it clear that it only applied to for-profit entities. The EAC thought the \$50 a day fine for late payments was sufficient. Councilwoman Horwatt expressed concerns that a \$50 daily fine might be insufficient to encourage large companies to timely pay their fees.

Solicitor Porter stated that the ordinance was drafted to assess the "residential rate" to residential properties in the R-2 District and that the non-residential rates primarily applied to all properties in the Borough. If a residential property in the R-2 District also had an accessory residential or non-residential structure, it would be assessed an "Additional Residential Fee" or "Additional Non-Residential Fee." Treasurer Schoen was concerned that this created too many possible variations, which would be difficult to initially assess and to keep track of who should pay what. Councilman Murdock suggested basing the cost off the solid waste bill for each property, but was advised that most commercial properties and certain other larger properties do not get a trash bill. If it couldn't be based on the trash bill, Councilman Murdock feared that it would require an audit of every property in the Borough to determine the number of units and their uses. Vice President Haldeman stated that the initial idea was that the fee would be added to the trash bill. Vice President Haldeman and Councilwoman Horwatt offered to obtain the information on the properties with multiple units and Treasurer Schoen offered to supply the information she has concerning properties with known multi-units.

Councilwoman Horwatt suggested that the fee structure be simplified by charging the same fee for each additional unit, regardless of whether it was residential or commercial. Council agreed that commercial properties should pay \$60 plus \$12 for each additional unit they have due to the greater amount of impervious surfaces they have. Treasurer Schoen suggested that once the survey was done to determine the number of units in the Borough, that the solid waste bills for multiple-unit properties be revised so that records were consistent. Councilwoman Farry agreed, noting that people with multiple units also had more total trash which should be reflected in the fees paid.

Councilman Murdock asked if the Borough could later adjust the fees if the original fee structure did not raise sufficient funds. President Thomas confirmed that the fees could be adjusted by resolution and re-iterated that all money received from the stormwater fees must be used for stormwater-related uses. Council agreed to re-consider the ordinance at the March Council meeting in order for everyone to fully understand the conditions and fees. Councilman Murdock reported that the next EAC meeting would be on April 22 at 7 p.m.

HARB Report: HARB reviewed four applications:

1. Chris Loesser 126 N. Green St. Install a traditional three-tier, split-rail fence around backyard perimeter of home.
2. Darlene Fenstermacher 201 S. Bellevue Replace existing sign with a new sign.
3. Tami Durlle 148 E. Marshall Ave. Replace and install front and side doors; repair garage door; paint it all white.
4. Christina Swain 154 W. Marshall Install white hardiplank siding, Bluestone patio; install 2 sunroom hardiplank windows; install remaining sunroom vinyl windows.

Motion: On motion of Councilman Murdock seconded by Councilman Mason, Council voted unanimously to approve all items in the HARB Report except the garage door for 154 W. Marshall Ave.

Councilman Murdock expressed concerns for the owners of historic homes, who have to go through the HARB process in addition to the other permit processes to do simple things such as replace siding, and noted that it may cost more to purchase HARB-approved material than the material originally desired. President Thomas suggested that he talk to the HARB chair, Robert Wharton and Vice Chairman David Kaiser, about his concerns. President Thomas stated that it may be a good idea to look into this further due to the changing times. Vice President Haldeman also agreed that HARB should be a bit more accommodating with the property owners.

L.O.S.I.: None.

Planning Commission: None.

Recreation Board: Councilwoman Horwatt reported that community service was completed and that everything went well. She asked that the lights in the gazebo be left up as a deterrent to vandals. Councilwoman Horwatt asked that placement of storage trailers at Oliver Heckman be reviewed for compliance with Borough ordinances. She will provide the Solicitor with pictures of the trailers to present to the Neshaminy School District Solicitor. Councilwoman Horwatt noted that nearly everyone in the Borough kept up with snow removal except for Maple Square. The next Recreation Board meeting is March 4, 2021 by zoom.

Shade Tree Commission: None.

Public Comment: Vice President Haldeman thought that snow removal in the Borough was successful overall. He reported that he and James Houston, Jr. went up into the clock tower at Borough Hall to repair it and that it worked again for a little while. Councilman Murdock asked to join Vice President Haldeman in repairing it again when the weather gets warmer.

Councilman Murdock asked if the fire department could replace bulbs on the string lights at Maple and Bellevue on a semi-regular basis. Vice President Haldeman stated that the LBBA had already purchased the lightbulbs and that Harvey Spencer was on board to replace them. Treasurer Schoen suggested that the lights be turned off until they were fully operational.

Solicitor's Report: None.

Adjournment: With no other business, on motion of Councilman Murdock seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the February 2021 Council Meeting at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Schoell
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Secretary