

Langhorne Council Meeting Minutes January 12, 2022

A virtual meeting of the Langhorne Borough Council was held on Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. President Murdock called the meeting to order and invited those in attendance to Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Public Comment: Pat Carr of 240 N. Green St. spoke about the Route 1 Interchange project, the Toll Brothers Crestwood project and the Woods Services Beechwood project. He expressed concern over the increased traffic flow that would result from these projects. President Murdock informed him that the Borough was not in possession of formally submitted plans for either the Crestwood or Beechwood projects, but what was known would be discussed later in the meeting.

Theresa Newman of 117 Flowers Ave. supported Woods Services moving their residents out of the Borough CLA facilities and into the new Beechwood units due to the problems with some of their residents.

Paul Schneider of 233 N. Bellevue Ave. also expressed concerns with the increased traffic flow in the Borough that will result from the proposed projects.

President Murdock stated that the Toll Brothers' sketch plan in circulation would not qualify as a by-right plan which may be why Toll Brothers had not returned to further discuss their plans. Councilwoman Horwatt asked the Solicitor to discuss the status of the project. Solicitor Porter stated that she has not received anything new since November.

Tina Gumienny of 131 Flowers Ave. was concerned that the increased traffic from the Toll Brother's project would adversely impact the intersection of Flowers Ave. and Pine St., which was subject to accidents and recommended that a traffic light be installed.

Barry Truchil of 312 N. Bellevue Ave. emphasized that the projects could significantly harm the character of the Borough and hoped that the Borough would enforce its ordinances.

Barbara Simpson, a member of the Bethlehem AME Church, was seriously concerned that the US 1 road improvements would affect the historic integrity of their property and the increased traffic would make the Borough more dangerous for children. Councilwoman Horwatt clarified that the project did not include the area Flowers Ave. and Cherry St. as the properties were in the National Historic District. Ms. Simpson stated she has had trouble trying to attend the meetings in person. President Murdock advised that the Council meetings are always held on Zoom and there is an invite link on the Borough website.

Dora Mitchell of 202 W. Richardson Ave. thought the projects would compromise the historical integrity of the Borough, was concerned over the increased traffic and hoped that Borough Council would amplify their voices to make their stance known to PennDOT.

Bernadette West of 312 N. Bellevue Ave. already had issues with crossing the road at Maple Ave. and Pine St. due to the very high traffic rate in the area and foresaw the increased traffic due to the projects adding to the problem.

Forrest Zetterberg of 129 W. Marshall Ave. thought the Borough should not give in to PennDOT as the interchange would bring increased traffic which would not be beneficial to the Borough. He opposed the Beechwood development's tie into the Borough's sewer lines.

Robert Wharton of 301 N. Bellevue Ave. objected to Toll Brothers' plan to tear down the three mansions on the property and its impact on the preservation of other historic properties.

Carol Zetterberg of 129 W. Marshall Ave. commended the community's coming together to discuss their displeasure with the projects and stressed the importance of having a strong Council who would listen to their citizens and work together to get things done.

Julia DiFerdinando of 127 Flowers Ave. thought the Borough was perfect the way it was and hoped that the Woods School and the Borough could come to an agreement where everyone could be satisfied.

Greg Millward of 121 Flowers Ave. thought the projects would negatively impact the residents who enjoyed the fact that many places were within walking distance of each other.

Deborah Tyl of 197 W. Marshall Ave. moved to the Borough in part due to its historic nature. Her primary concern was the significant increase in traffic from the US 1 Interchange project and its greater risk to Beechwood residents crossing the roads safely.

Chris Blaydon of 245 W. Maple Ave. thought it was imperative that Borough Council let Woods Services know how important historic buildings were. He suggested a pedestrian bridge be built connecting the Borough and Langhorne Manor Borough. President Murdock stated that Langhorne Manor was not in favor of a pedestrian overpass. The location of the proposed high-rise building was noted to be in the front east corner of the property.

Mayor's Report: None.

Chief's Report: Chief Godzieba reported that no issues arose during Dickens Night and that Bucks County Emergency Management purchased 300,000 Covid test kits to be distributed to Bucks County residents, who could pick up kits at designated locations on January 19th, January 26th and February 2nd. The closest site was Sesame Place.

Councilwoman Horwatt and Beth Delaney were concerned about people passing stopped school buses. Chief Godzieba advised them to give pictures of license plates to the school bus drivers, who have the right to report the drivers to the police, who can then issue citations.

Due to the trouble some people have seeing the stop sign when going north on Bellevue Ave. from US Route 1, the Chief will have blinking lights installed on the stop signs to get people's attention. Chief Godzieba had no updates on the swings stolen from the Mayors Playground.

Manager's Report: Manager Schoell reported that the 2022 Budget was published in the newspaper in December. As it is a re-organization year, the budget should be re-approved by Council.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Vice President Mason, Council voted unanimously to re-approve the published 2022 Budget.

Manager Schoell stated that the Summit Ave. signs were replaced and that new stop signs were also installed. Manager Schoell, Councilman Haldeman and Public Works employee Steve Schoell met with Bob Graham of PennDOT and Kevin Deetz from the Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority on December 28th regarding the worsening road depression on S. Bellevue Ave. Although BCW&SA found no issues after a camera test, they will put down cold patch to stop it worsening and will open up the road in the spring to find out the source of the problem. If it is a PennDOT issue, he will contact Mr. Graham and let them know what they have found.

Manager Schoell received the RDA Grant contracts for the following items and needed a resolution authorizing the signing of the contracts:

Police Body and Vehicle Cameras	\$33,229.00
Police Duty Weapon & Ammunition	\$9,455.00
Public Works Garage Doors	\$14,720.00
Borough Hall Improvement Project	\$91,200.00
Traffic Calming Equipment	\$16,380.00

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilwoman Farry, Council voted unanimously to approve the signing of the RDA Grant contracts.

Manager Schoell asked about that status of the appointment of the Borough Engineer. Councilman Haldeman suggested CKS, because they only handle municipalities and are the lowest cost overall. Councilman Mason, Councilwoman Culleton, and Councilwoman Horwatt agreed, although Councilwoman Horwatt was concerned that CKS was not located in Lower Bucks County, that Dumack Engineering was and that Dumack had helped out through the years.

Councilwoman Culleton asked why the Borough Engineer did not regularly attend meetings and was advised that they charge for attendance and were only asked to attend when necessary. She was also advised that the Borough was seeking a new engineer because the current engineer was working with Woods Services on their new development projects which was creating a conflict of interest. On the suggestion of Councilwoman Horwatt, Council asked the Manager and Solicitor to contact other municipalities to get their opinions on engineering firms.

Manager Schoell requested that President Murdock appoint liaisons to the Borough Boards and Committees. President Murdock appointed Councilwoman Culleton to the Shade Tree Commission, Councilwoman Horwatt to the Planning Commission, and Councilwomen Farry and Culleton to handle social media and the Borough website; all other liaisons would remain the same. As Manager Schoell was updating the 2022 Municipal Directory for Boards and Commissions, she asked Council to submit any changes directly to the Borough Office.

Manager Schoell reported that the 2022 Recycling Contract with Hough Associates would cost \$1,400 and that the Borough should receive a check from the 2020 RDA Recycling Grant for around \$10,000.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to approve the Recycling Contract renewal with Hough Associates for \$1,400.

Manager Schoell reported that the committee met to consider the ARPA funds and it was decided that Councilwoman Farry would draft a questionnaire Council could submit to non-profits in the Borough to assist in dispersing funds. Councilwoman Farry stated that a major goal for the use of the ARPA funds was to support non-governmental organizations in the Borough that suffered due to Covid and that the questionnaire would be used to verify information and to prove that the organizations had lost revenue due to Covid.

Manager Schoell asked Council to approve the purchase of computer equipment for Borough Hall and the Police Department in the amount of \$12,322 and the purchase of two meeting “Owls” and a work station for Council Meetings.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to purchase computer equipment for a cost of \$12,322 and to allocate up to \$5,000 to purchase two Owls and a work station.

Manager Schoell reminded Council to file their 2022 ethics statements and that they were sent the 2022 Bucks County Planning Commission update on activities and procedures. Chief Godzieba stated that the new electronic key fob system would soon be installed in Borough Hall.

Engineer’s Report: None.

Approval of the Minutes:

Motion: On motion of Vice President Mason seconded by Councilwoman Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the December 7th work session minutes, December 8th Council meeting minutes, and January 3rd Reorganization meeting Minutes, as revised by the Solicitor.

Approval of the Treasurer’s Report:

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Vice President Mason, Council voted unanimously to approve the Treasurer’s Report.

Payment of the Bills: Council asked about the TWG Security invoice and was advised by Chief Godzieba that TWG Security came out to adjust the height of the traffic light cameras and to change the camera server.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Farry seconded by Councilman Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to approve the payment of the bills.

EAC: Vice President Mason stated that EAC did not meet last month and that the 2022 meetings were scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on January 19, April 20, August 17, and November 21.

HARB: HARB recommended approval of the following application:

1. Mariusz Wrobel 118 E. Richardson Ave.

No structural changes were proposed for the front of the building, the proposed dormer and window in the original application were withdrawn and a boarded-up window will be restored to the original window. The siding on the side of the house and the proposed rear addition will be Hardee Plank and will match the front. The roof shingles for the addition will be the same Williamsburg Slate on the rest of the house's roof.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Culleton seconded by Councilman Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to approve the HARB Application for 118 E. Richardson Ave.

LOSI: Pat Carr reported that the windows on Heritage Farm were being replaced. He discussed the possibility of a group campout and Civil War reenactment at the Farm.

Planning Commission: Brian Smiley made a presentation for Council which emphasized three aspects of US 1 interchange to PennDOT: small, safe, and be a Street. "Small" stressed that the Borough was a small town with many volunteers, comprised of convenient walkability between locations and the easy connectivity of the fire station to other neighboring areas. "Safe" relied on a safe and walkable street design, with narrow streets for short pedestrian road crossings. "Street" meant a place for building wealth, directly connected to people being able to walk through the Borough. He noted that the current plans involved using six lanes on Route 413 to accommodate traffic, while a previous plan had on-ramps connected to Route 413 directly that also kept the existing access road exits on Route 1 open. As Langhorne Manor might not be in favor of the previous plan, he suggested proposing that there should only be one off-ramp on the southbound side.

Councilman Mason was in favor of the modified proposal and asked whether PennDOT had considered how much the Borough would be affected. Brian Smiley did not believe they had considered most of the Borough's concerns. Councilwoman Horwatt agreed that the Borough should oppose the current plan, especially as the project was still in the planning stage. Solicitor Porter advised Councilwoman Culleton that the Borough Engineer provided a traffic consultant.

As President Murdock was stepping down from the US 1 Interchange committee, he asked for another volunteer. Vice President Mason offered to serve, Councilwoman Horwatt agreed to continue as Planning Commission liaison and Councilman Marfia as the 3rd member.

Public Comment: Pat Carr of 240 N. Green St. agreed with the solutions that Brian Smiley presented and encouraged Council to take action now before it was too late. He also expressed concerns over hunting in Catawissa. Chief Godzieba stated that he had received no reports of gunshots and that bow hunting was legal with homeowner approval.

Florence Wharton of 301 N. Bellevue Ave. had ideas for a good engineer whose research may prove to be beneficial to the Borough and offered to assist Council in choosing alternatives.

Larry Zetterberg of 129 W. Marshall Ave. asked whether PennDOT was considering closing the access roads off of US Route 1 and was advised that that was part of the current plan.

Joanne Schneider of 233 N. Bellevue Ave. related that PennDOT had caused similar issues in Richboro, which greatly affected that town in a negative way. Paul Schneider thanked Brian Smiley for his presentation and efforts.

Council was in favor of the alternative plans. President Murdock suggested that the Planning Commission present these plans to PennDOT for their consideration.

Solicitor's Report: Solicitor Porter presented three resolutions for Council approval.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Vice President Mason, Council voted 6-0-1 to adopt the Bucks County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Resolution, with an abstention from Councilwoman Culleton.

Motion: On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to approve the Resolution authorizing Treasurer Schoen, President Murdock, Vice President Mason and Councilman Haldeman as the First National Bank of Newtown Account check signers and requiring 2 signatures on all checks.

Solicitor Porter presented the updated 2022 Fee Schedule Resolution, with no changes other than the wording for the road occupancy permits reading either "per tax map parcel or 50 feet." Councilwoman Horwatt and Councilman Haldeman expressed concerns over the fees for larger developments. Solicitor Porter stated she would review the information.

Motion: On motion of Councilman Haldeman seconded by Vice President Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to approve the Fee Schedule Resolution with appropriate changes.

Adjournment: With no other business, on motion of Councilwoman Farry seconded by Councilman Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the January 2022 Council Meeting at 10:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Schoell
Borough Secretary