

## Langhorne Borough Council Meeting

June 8, 2022

A meeting of the Langhorne Borough Council was held Wednesday, June 8, 2022, in person with Zoom attendees. President Paul Murdock called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and invited those in attendance to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**In attendance:** President Paul Murdock; Vice President Rich Mason; Council members Nancy Culleton, Kristen Farry, Scott Haldeman, Kathleen Horwatt, and Anthony Marfia; Mayor Joseph Taylor; Solicitor Catherine Anne Porter; Police Chief John Godzieba; Manager Paul Leonard. **Absent:** Treasurer Ellyn Schoen.

**Mayor's Report:** Mayor Taylor and Chief Godzieba received a letter from LBBA stating they would like to discontinue having an extra police officer on duty at the summer concerts. The Mayor and the Chief felt that having the additional officer on duty was important for safety.

**Police Chief's Report:** Chief Godzieba will follow up with Tim Burns, vice-president of LBBA. Because the Borough agreed to pay half the cost of the additional officer, the cost to LBBA is only \$81/hour. The Chief thanked President Murdock for his help with the barricades for the Memorial Day parade.

**Announcements and Presentations:** None.

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:** President Murdock explained that going forward, the first public comment period will continue to be for non-agenda items. For agenda items, there will be a public comment period before a vote is taken.

Celeste Oliver, 124 E Maple Avenue, inquired about the process of getting permission for an event with vendors and food trucks at the Mayor's Playground and Cherry Street in October. She was advised that the organizer should talk to the chair of the Rec Board first and then apply for a permit. Middletown Township must also be consulted about public events that involve Cherry Street.

**Emergency Tree Work:** The condition of the trees at the Mayors' Playground was discussed. After the emergency work, additional work is needed work on several other trees on Pine and Maple near the playground which will cost more and will need to be approved separately.

**Motion:** On the motion of Councilperson Horwatt, seconded by Councilperson Culleton, Council voted unanimously to spend up to \$375 from the General Fund for Big Oak Tree to trim dead branches from trees around (though not inside) the mayor's playground on an emergency basis.

**Manager's Report:** New Interim Borough Manager Paul Leonard introduced himself. He had already taken a Borough tour with Chief Godzieba and met with several council members. He is focused on learning about the Borough and hearing Council's priorities for his work. He is working on hiring office and public works support staff. He had spoken with his contacts at Middletown Township and BCWSA to learn about the possible sale of BCWSA and recommended that Council take a little more time before sending a resolution to commissioners. He had spoken with Solicitor Porter about impending land development issues. He is happy to hear from people and can be reached through the same borough manager's email address and will provide his cell number.

**Engineer:** No report.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Horwatt seconded by Councilperson Farry, Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes from May 11.

**Approval to Pay the Bills:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Haldeman seconded by Councilperson Marfia, Council voted unanimously to pay the bills.

**Treasurer's Report:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Horwatt seconded by Councilperson Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to accept the Treasurer's Report.

**Committees, Boards and Commissions:**

**EAC:** The Zoom option for the committee's August 17 meeting should be publicized. Vice President Mason thanked members of EAC and others who have been helping with the MS4 report to the DEP. He asked the Manager and Solicitor to assess whether our ordinances are consistent with current state and federal regulations. Council minutes will need to show that the required assessment have been done by June 30. Our last report was submitted in 2011. Councilperson Horwatt noted that newly hired employees will need to go through the Procedures Checklist before June 30.

**Fire Company:** No report.

**HARB:** HARB recommended the approval of an application from Langhorne Council for the Arts to install a mural honoring six Langhorne women who have made history by going above and beyond the restraints of their time. LCA President Pat Mervine confirmed that Donna Thomas has granted permission to install the mural on the back wall of Will Travel.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Farry, seconded by Councilperson Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the HARB recommendation.

**Farm/LOSI:** Pat Carr reported that some minor repairs had been done and that the Flea Market was rescheduled for June 25.

**Planning Commission:** Chair Brian Smiley introduced members of the Planning Commission to Manager Leonard. PennDOT is planning meetings about the RC3 Project, first with local officials and then with the general public, for Langhorne Borough, Langhorne Manor Borough, and Middletown Township. Planning Commission said it would like PennDOT to clearly state whether the purpose of these meetings is purely informational or to invite discussion. President Murdock will forward PennDOT's initial email about these plans to the rest of Council. He explained that he does his best to respond to Council members' requests that he share information.

President Murdock had already asked JMT to convey to PennDOT a request that the public meetings be open to all three municipalities. He will convey Council's additional requests, which are that PennDOT make all the public meetings hybrid, schedule them across several weeks to ensure maximum participation, schedule them to allow municipalities at least a month afterward to gather information and public comment, and structure them to be not just informational but to allow for public comment and feedback.

He will ask for clarification on whether PennDOT wants a separate meeting for each municipality's public officials. Councilperson Culleton stated that the public officials' meetings should also be joint so that we can hear each other's concerns. Council was comfortable with the public officials' meetings being virtual. It was suggested that municipalities could rotate hosting duties for the public meetings, using Middletown's facilities.

Council anticipated asking Bucks County Planning Commission for a scope of work for help with the process of requesting that Route 413 be renumbered to follow I-295. This would mean the current 413 from Langhorne to Newtown would become 513 or Alt 413.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Horwatt seconded by Vice President Mason, Council voted unanimously to sign the General Planning Work Services Agreement with the county commissioners.

President Murdock and Councilperson/Interim Secretary Culleton signed the document and Manager Leonard will deliver it to the Bucks County Planning Commission. The agreement costs nothing but will enable the Borough to proceed efficiently with BCPC when ready to request a scope of work, without having to apply to the County Commissioners for each project. BCPC's fees for services are significantly lower than those of a private planner. BCPC has already assigned a county planner who will do certain things free.

Councilperson Horwatt will forward the traffic study proposals from SAFE and Pennoni to Brian Smiley.

**Recreation Board:** Councilperson Horwatt explained that there was an annual fee of \$50 to be part of the Bucks County Recreation Council, which publicizes events across the County. Its current brochure prominently featured LBBA's summer concerts in the park. Rec Board had approved emergency tree work near the Mayor's Playground. The \$24K forfeited from a contractor escrow and deposited into General Funds and earmarked for the Rec Board was discussed. Rec Board members will apply for child abuse clearances. Councilperson Horwatt recommended all Borough officials get clearance as well. The September meeting will be moved to October due to a conflict with Labor Day. Volunteers are needed on Tuesdays to help with cleanup of the playground. Young people from the County juvenile center help through a service-learning program. Some are now getting jobs due to the landscaping skills they have acquired.

**Shade Tree Commission:** The next meeting was moved to July 11 due to the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. Councilperson Culleton will ask the Commission to 1) obtain scope of work and estimates for tree work on Maple Avenue; 2) review its policy of requiring that removal of low hanging branches near the street be done only by the Commission; and 3) do a proactive Catawissa inspection. Pat Carr of LOSI offered to join the Catawissa walk-through.

**Communications Team:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Culleton, seconded by Councilperson Marfia, Council voted unanimously to post on the website approved work session minutes and the current fee schedule.

**Public Comment:** Pat Carr, 240 N Green Street, added to the LOSI report that twenty volunteers helped on Catawissa Clean-up Day, planting and weeding at the front entrance and repairing erosion at the Watson Avenue entrance and the footbridge. Four tons of stone were purchased. Work on the pollinator garden is planned. Catawissa improvement days are registered events through Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and help fulfill our MS4 requirements.

Paul Schneider, 233 N Bellevue Avenue, noted a Courier-Times story about roundabouts in Doylestown Township that could not be built if Township supervisors opposed them and said PennDOT should explain why Langhorne Borough is different. Vice President Mason thought that PennDOT would claim it is because the project stops at the Borough. Councilperson Culleton asked President Murdock to raise the question in his communication with PennDOT about upcoming meetings. Solicitor Porter remarked that Buckingham Township spent \$200K on an unsuccessful lawsuit against PennDOT.

Bob Cumming, 311 W Maple Avenue, asked why Middletown Township has not supported the Borough's opposition to the RC3 interchange. President Murdock responded that Middletown has no reason to object if most of its residents don't seem to care.

Bob Cumming, 311 W Maple Avenue, and Alberto Soares and Lisa Rebuck, 204 S Pine Street, asked why Langhorne police don't institute truck stops. Truck stops have reduced traffic in Newtown. President Murdock shared the Borough police incident statistics for the current year and explained that hiring extra police for truck stops would be very expensive.

**Solicitor's Report:** Two Zoning Hearing requests have been filed. One is from a resident of Country Club Lane. The other is from Toll Brothers, requesting zoning variances for the Crestwood property. It was anticipated that the Toll Brothers hearing would not be scheduled before the end of July. Council would like Solicitor Porter to attend.

Manager Leonard will ask Bucks County Planning Commission for recommendations on how to handle Toll Brothers' request. Solicitor Porter agreed that we need to handle the situation carefully. Creating a zoning overlay might mean we could require that the new development be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. Developers have ways of achieving this, for example by using good finishes. Councilperson Marfia raised the question of extending the Historic District.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Haldeman, seconded by Councilperson Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to adopt the revised Use and Occupancy ordinance. It will be posted on the website.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Horwatt, seconded by Vice President Mason, Council voted unanimously to advertise the proposed change in zoning of the Mayor's Playground from R2 to Recreational. Anyone living within 100 feet of the playground needs to be notified.

Manager Leonard drafted a preliminary resolution asking the County Commissioners and Municipal Authority to do a thorough analysis of benefits and costs, including to residents, of the potential sale of BCWSA. This is work they must do anyway, but it should be done in plenty of time for citizens to respond. Council supported the manager's approach.

Councilperson Horwatt thanked those who helped with trash and streets for the Memorial Day parade. She hoped Manager Leonard would hire streets help with approval of the Personnel Committee.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilperson Haldeman, seconded by Councilperson Marfia, Council voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Culleton

Councilperson/Interim Secretary