

## **Langhorne Borough Council Meeting Minutes March 9, 2022**

A meeting of the Langhorne Borough Council was held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 7:30 p.m., both in Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom. President Murdock called the meeting to order and invited everyone in attendance to Pledge Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: President Paul Murdock, Vice President Richard Mason, Councilwomen Kristen Farry and Nancy Culleton, Councilmen Scott Haldeman and Anthony Marfia, Police Chief John Godzieba, Borough Manager/Secretary Christine Schoell, Solicitor Catherine Anne Porter, and Treasurer Ellyn Schoen. Councilwoman Horwatt and Treasurer Schoen were present via Zoom. Absent was: Mayor Joseph Taylor.

President Murdock introduced the Borough's new engineers from CKS Engineering, Patrick DiGangi and George DiPersio. They thanked Council for selecting their company. Mr. DiGangi stated he had been with CKS for 34 years and handled many municipal clients and looked forward to working with the Borough.

**Planning Commission:** President Murdock moved the Planning Commission report to the beginning of the meeting to discuss the US Route 1 RC3 Interchange project. Brian Smiley presented a letter drafted by SAFE Engineering to PennDOT regarding the Project, which stated that there would be an additional projected 60% delay during rush hour on N. Pine St. and more accidents and suggested optimizing traffic lights for pedestrian crossing and diverting the traffic away from Pine St. Vice President Mason stated that PennDOT was open to discussing using I 295 as a potential way to circumvent the Borough and divert traffic. Brian Smiley stated that the engineer proposed a single lane roundabout at the new intersection of Route 413 and Gillam Ave. which could help divert traffic to replace the proposed cloverleaf interchange. The traffic engineer also proposed three roundabouts to slow the traffic flow, including one at the blinking traffic light on the Langhorne Manor side of Route 1 and one at Bellevue Ave. and Gillam Ave. Councilwoman Culleton stated that she agreed with these compromises. Councilman Haldeman did not see how it was possible to put a roundabout at Route 413 and Gillam Ave., and Brian Smiley emphasized that it would be a small roundabout. Councilman Haldeman said that the Borough should be fighting primarily for the mitigation efforts, and said that PennDOT already stated that they will not do any mitigation outside of the scope of the project. President Murdock agreed with designating Route 413 as alternate and re-routing Route 213 to I-295. He also stated that PennDOT was asked for speed bumps on Gillam Ave. along with signage and other beautification projects outside the scope of the overall project and they agreed to it. Brian Smiley suggested pushing for an in-person meeting with PennDOT to discuss Borough concerns and that the Planning Commission's goal was not to stop the project entirely, but to propose alternatives that would not harm the integrity of the Borough. Councilwoman Horwatt agreed with alternatives due to the fact that the proposed interchange would require expensive maintenance from the Borough. Councilwoman Farry asked about how much Joe Fiocco, the engineer, had been paid for his work and was advised he was paid \$850 so far for 7-8 hours of work. Councilman Haldeman said that the Borough should start the grant process for the TCDI mitigation and apply to PennDOT for the timing of the lights under contract.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Vice President Mason, Council voted 4-3 to approve sending the letter from the traffic engineers to PennDOT and all other interested parties. President Murdock, Councilman Haldeman, and Councilwoman Farry opposed.

Councilwoman Culleton asked about having a public meeting with JMT so residents could ask questions and everyone could be on the same page. Solicitor Porter stated that a special meeting would have to be called if all Council members wished to be present. Councilwoman Farry wanted to emphasize that the entirety of Council was opposed to the project as proposed but had different ideas on moving forward. Vice President Mason stated that PennDOT would not agree to speed bumps nor pedestrian walkways which would require the road to be widened and that the project was projected to be completed in 2027 or 2028, which provided time for the Borough to secure mitigations. President Murdock said that the streets were currently not safe for pedestrian crossings and suggested seeking grants now to address that issue. Councilwoman Horwatt felt that crosswalks would not be helpful due to the extra road lanes. Brian Smiley said that PennDOT was still in negotiation regarding the extra lanes.

**Public Comment:** Margaret Malandra of 203 Station Ave. was disappointed that three Council members voted against sending the letter to PennDOT and expressed concern due to the increased traffic from the interchange.

Christina Swain of 154 W. Marshall Ave. expressed concern about the historical integrity of the Borough as well as how the interchange will negatively affect property values.

John Hediger of 147 W. Marshall Ave. was concerned about the expenses of the project and hoped that the Borough could get accommodations from PennDOT.

Paul Schneider of 233 N. Bellevue Ave. stated that there could be at least a mile of traffic backup through the Borough as a result of the interchange and that Langhorne Manor was getting tradeoffs and the Borough was not getting any.

Michael Berling of 224 N. Pine St. opposed the project. He showed a video concerning activities near his property and asked that something be done to keep the Borough safer.

Carol Zetterberg of 129 W. Marshall Ave. discussed a petition opposing the project and thanked those who had already signed it as well as encouraged other people to sign.

Beth Delaney of 119 W. Marshall Ave. stated that she had helped with the petition and that everyone she spoke to opposed the partial cloverleaf plan. Paula Miller of 118 National Ave. discussed the petition to place a Do Not Enter sign on National Ave. with certain times of day posted to decrease cut-through traffic.

Becky Gilbert, 502 S Bellevue Ave. asked why Bellevue Ave.'s problems had not been fixed over the years and asked whether mitigation money could be used to fix Bellevue Ave.

R.J. Runowski of 145 E. Richardson Ave. was concerned about the misinformation regarding the Route 1 project and thanked Frank Farry for discussing the project with him.

Elizabeth Williams of 23 Country Club Ln. asked about the plans to stop the project and stated that if it was not possible that money should be invested in making the Borough safer now and also suggested building a walkway from the Borough to Core Creek.

Chris Chambers of N. Bellevue Ave. opposed the project and asked that N. Bellevue Ave. not be designated as alternate Route 13, citing that it was too congested and unsafe as it was. He suggested increased police spending to compensate for the increased traffic as well as banning commercial vehicles inside the town.

Vice President Mason stated that roads like National Ave. could be turned into private roads and that a barrier could be put in the middle of the road to block through traffic. President Murdock stated that he was against sending a letter to PennDOT because he wanted to prioritize working on mitigation efforts now. He also discussed the proposed Do Not Enter sign on National Ave., concerns about Summit Ave. and continuing discussions with Chief Godzieba to abate these issues.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilwoman Horwatt seconded by Councilman Haldeman, Council voted unanimously to request proposals from Safe Engineering and Pennoni to do the appropriate traffic studies in the quadrants of the Borough and look at the Borough holistically in terms of traffic safety.

**Motion:** On motion of Vice President Mason seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to request Safe Engineering to look into the PennDOT plan to conform to the proper process.

Councilwoman Farry confirmed that Safe Engineering could do these traffic studies beyond the scope of the Route 1 project. Solicitor Porter stated that the \$5,000 authorization for the engineer could not be paid toward this and that it would require a new motion.

**Mayor's Report:** None.

**Chief's Report:** Chief Godzieba discussed a property on E. Marshall Avenue.

**Manager's Report:** Manager Schoell reported on the March 7<sup>th</sup> ARPA meeting and asked Council to approve the 13 applications from nonprofit organizations for \$800 each for a total of \$10,400.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilman Haldeman seconded by Councilwoman Culleton, Council voted unanimously to approve paying the ARPA funds in the total of \$10,400.

Manager Schoell stated that the American Legion sent out an invitation to Council members to be introduced at and ride in the Memorial Day parade on May 30, 2022.

Manager Schoell reported that David Kaiser sent a resignation e-mail from the HARB board and that there are currently 7 members. HARB may need to replace one of the current members with a member that does building inspections.

Manager Schoell wanted to remind Council that Woods Services requested to have their 5K Run this year and that it was currently scheduled for May 7th.

Manager Schoell reported that the Borough received the recycling grant money in the amount of \$12,424.72 for 2020.

Manager Schoell stated that Pat Carr from LOSI sent a list requesting banner permission for various annual concerts and events and asked to change the Folk Song Society Concert to June 11. Manager Schoell reported that Deputy Chief Joseph Taylor from the Langhorne-Middletown Fire Company requested a banner to ask for volunteer firefighters. Councilwoman Horwatt stated that the first two sections of the Mayor’s Playground fence are not acceptable for banners and that there was another banner request from the Langhorne Council for the Arts for the Richardson House fence for the Hicks Day event. Council approved the banner requests.

Manager Schoell reported that she received Requests for Recreational Facilities for the August 27<sup>th</sup> Rotary Pet Fair (rain date of October 15) and the LBBA Concerts in the Park from June 1 to August 31. Council supported these requests provided that the Borough receives valid insurance certificates for the events.

Vice President Mason suggested discontinuing Resolution 2020-11 which established the local state of emergency declaration due to Covid.

**Motion:** On motion of Councilman Haldeman seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to discontinue the local state of emergency declaration due to Covid.

Manager Schoell reported that Susan Asack, who oversaw the Pine Watson Shopping Center, had requested a lighted sign for Pizza Pie II to improve their visibility. It was agreed that the request should be submitted to HARB first.

**Engineer’s Report:** None.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

**Motion:** On motion of Councilwoman Culleton seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to approve the February 2022 Council Work Session Minutes.

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

**Motion:** On motion of Councilwoman Culleton seconded by Councilman Marfia, Council voted unanimously to approve the February 2022 Treasurer’s Report.

**Payment of the Bills:**

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

**EAC:** Vice President Mason stated that there was no meeting or report, but that the next meeting was scheduled for April 21.

**HARB:** HARB recommended the approval of the following applications:

1. Elsa Arbitman 200 S. Bellevue Ave.

Replace deteriorating slate sidewalk on Richardson Ave. and the walkway to the front entrance of the building (as per photos provided).

2. Patricia Mervine

Installation of murals on the South side of the HICKS house and on the traffic signal control boxes (as per photos provided).

**Motion:** On motion of Councilman Haldeman seconded by Councilwoman Horwatt, Council voted unanimously to approve the March 2022 HARB Report.

**Recreation Board:** Councilwoman Horwatt reported that there would be a dedication for the Mayors Playground on May 21st.

**Planning Commission:** None.

**Shade Tree Commission:** None.

President Murdock reported that he and Councilwomen Culleton and Farry met as the communications team to discuss options to move forward regarding the Borough website as well as social media. He stated that Council would be able to discuss it more in the future.

**Public Comment:** Brian Sayre of 140 E. Marshall Ave. expressed safety concerns about possible problems of drug use and other criminal activity on Marshall Avenue.

Carol Zetterberg of 129 W. Marshall Ave. stated that good things often take time and that neither the citizens nor Council should give up with regards to the PennDOT project.

Manager Schoell stated that a resident on W. Richardson Ave. wanted the ongoing flooding situation be brought to Council's attention. Councilman Haldeman stated that the problem had been ongoing for 20 years, that the drain was blocked and that it would cost a lot of money to fix it. President Murdock asked to put it on discussion for next month's meeting. Councilwoman Horwatt suggested getting all the information together and applying for grants.

**Solicitor's Report:** Solicitor Porter reported on the meeting with Toll Brothers and their willingness to reduce density, increase public space and dedicate some walkways as public walkways, to not use Flowers Ave. as an entry or exit point, and having limited entry/exit point on Pine St. President Murdock stated that if they went with a rear facing plan, it would include 72 homes with 8.2 acres of open space, while the other plan would include 60 homes with 8.4 acres of open space. Councilman Marfia asked about making the entire area part of the historic district, and Solicitor Porter stated that around half of it was historic. Solicitor Porter advised that they would like to do their own trash and plowing and keep the roads private and that Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority had capacity for the proposed homes. There were concerns about the width of the roads and whether fire trucks could use them. Councilwoman Horwatt was opposed to HOAs.

President Murdock asked the Planning Commission to take the plan and put together a redevelopment plan that can be implemented over the next few years in order to help the Borough.

**Adjournment:** With no other business, on motion of Councilman Haldeman seconded by Councilwoman Culleton, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the March 2022 Council Meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Prepared by Christine Schoell, Borough Secretary when the meeting was held. Affirmed as accurate and presented for approval by Nancy Culleton, interim Borough Secretary.