

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

March 16, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Wednesday, March 16, 2011 with the following persons present: Council President Kevin Conrad; Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Nathalie Kulesa, Elizabeth Heckler, Deborah Hutcheson, James Gallen, Amy Good-Ashman; Mayor Shane Keller; Borough Manager Richard Sichler; Police Chief Edward Fabriziani; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Dan Becker, Kozloff Stoudt; Chief Code Enforcement Officer Tracey Levering; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Recreation Coordinator Daphne Klahr; Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach; Administrative Assistant Cathy Hoffman; Terry Naugle, Great Valley Consultants.

<u>VISITORS:</u>	Audrey Schaeffer	Resident
	Kim Bucolo	Resident
	Linda Chavez	Resident
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Reporter	Reading Eagle

Council President Kevin Conrad called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and apologized for the late start which was due to an Executive Session that was held immediately prior to the Council session. The Pledge of Allegiance and roll call then followed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Linda Chavez spoke about the pear trees that were planted along Franklin Street and told Council how unsightly and dangerous it has become since the fruit has been dropping. She presented a petition to Council that was signed by most of the residents of the north side of the 400 block of Franklin, which asks for the timely removal of these trees. Mr. Conrad said he had faced the same issue on Pine Street a few years ago and understood her concerns. He asked her to attend the next Shade Tree Commission meeting to discuss the issue and noted that the petition and the picture she presented would be sent to the Commission for their review.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve the minutes of February 15th and 24th, 2011. **Motion carried.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Environmental Advisory Council Resolution Adoption and Appointments – Mr. Wert said that he had spoken with three residents who have volunteered to become members of the Environmental Advisory Council – Amber Rambo, Mike Morrill, Erica Lavdanski, who would serve along with the Borough Manager and one Borough Council member. A resolution has been prepared for the creation of the E.A.C. which needs to be adopted before appointments can be made.

There was much discussion regarding attendance at the meetings and an amendment was recommended to be added to the resolution which would address this issue. **Moved** by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve the creation of the Environmental Advisory Council

through Resolution 2011-2 with the amendment that two consecutive missed meetings without due cause would require replacement of the member. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa that Michael Morrill be appointed to the E.A.C. for a one year term, Erica Lavdanski for a two year term, and Amber Rambo for a three year term, along with the Borough Manager and Mr. Wert. **Motion carried.** It was noted that the Borough Manager and a Council member would be continual members of the E.A.C. Mr. Conrad recommended that the five members meet to discuss the dates and times for meetings, as well as appointing a Chairperson. Mr. Conrad also suggested that they may only need to meet every other month, and asked Mr. Sichler to coordinate the dates and times for the meetings.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Ordinance 995 - Susquehanna Municipal Trust - Mr. Sichler noted that the ordinance was discussed at the last meeting and has been advertised and is ready for Council's vote. By entering into the agreement and becoming a member of the Susquehanna Municipal Trust, the Borough will be saving approximately \$42,000 per year for workers' compensation. **Moved** by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve Ordinance 995 for the Susquehanna Municipal Trust. **Motion carried.**

Ordinance 996 – Airport Zoning – Mr. Becker stated that the Airport Zoning ordinance has been prepared but must be reviewed by the County Planning Commission. It should be ready for adoption at the April Meeting. Mr. Gallen stated he would like to speak with Mr. Becker regarding the flight path for the Reading Hospital's heliport and the possibility of having the flight path moved to the area above the Museum, which would be a safer location in the event that something should happen. Mr. Conrad asked Mr. Gallen to report back to Council with the information he receives.

CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:

Solicitor's Report – Mr. Becker stated that all items pertaining to his report were covered under other items of the agenda. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to approve the Solicitor's Report. **Motion carried.**

Engineer's Report – Mr. Naugle referred to his report and noted an amendment. He stated that he and Mr. Rohrbach would be meeting on Friday to discuss project 'B'. They are looking to remove South 6th Avenue from the project and work on South 5th instead, between Franklin and Chestnut. The scope of the project includes new sidewalks, a grass median and street trees.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the Engineer's report. **Motion carried.**

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:

Penn Avenue Streetscape Improvements – Mr. Sichler said that he has reviewed a streetscape plan for the north side of the 200 block of Penn Avenue, which was originally designed through Main Street. Potential designers were then consulted to review the plan which would include the preparation of a written submission for PennDOT. Borough resident Bruce Dingeldein is reviewing the plan and will be

providing a cost for the project. There are funds available from PennDOT as well as another funding organization that is interested in paying for a portion of the project. Mr. Sichler hopes to have the plan in hand by the next Council meeting.

Water and Sewer Rates – Mr. Sichler reviewed documents that were distributed to Council regarding the rate increases that are necessary to adequately fund the water and sewer utilities. He noted that a rate study had been done by Great Valley Consultants and was discussed by the Infrastructure Committee at their meeting on March 14th. Mr. Sichler said that when he reviewed the study again, he used actual numbers from 2010 budget to get a more accurate idea of what the increases should be for 2011. It was also noted that the JMA has increased the Borough's sewer fees by 8% and the WBWA has increased water fees by 2%. Based on all of this information, it was the recommendation of the Infrastructure Committee that the sewer rate be increased by 10% and the water rate by 20%.

There was some discussion regarding the difference between commercial and residential rates and it was suggested that the commercial users be given a much higher rate. Because the subject required more information, it was decided that this discussion be continued at the next Council meeting. However, it was determined that the initial rate increase as proposed by the Infrastructure Committee be implemented immediately to ensure that the rate increase was in place for the quarterly (predominately residential) customers. Any further increase to the commercial rates will be decided later once Mr. Sichler gathers more information.

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mr. Gallen to approve the rate increase as presented by the Borough Manager, for a water rate increase of 20% and a sewer rate increase of 10%. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Motion carried.**

MAYOR'S REPORT AND MAIN STREET REPORT:

Mayor Keller noted the two sets of minutes that had been included in each Council packet, for the Main Street Foundation and Main Street Authority. He thanked Mrs. Heckler for making the suggestion and stated that the minutes will be included in the packets from now on. He also reported that the Farmers' Market will begin the 2011 season on May 29th. Beginning on April 7th, "First Thursdays" will include bands performing on the stage that will be located on N. 6th Avenue at Penn Avenue.

Mayor Keller also reported that Main Street has entered into an agreement with Neo-Pangea (a West Reading web and media design company) to create a targeted marketing campaign for the entire borough. He added that they are currently working on web site development and will provide a presentation for Council if they wish.

In conjunction with the Armed Forces Day Parade, Main Street would like to honor our local heroes by getting a group of veterans from West Reading to march together in the parade. Main Street is looking for ways to get this information to the residents and it was suggested that the free space on the new water bills be utilized.

Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to accept the Mayor's report. **Motion carried.**

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Code Enforcement – Chief Code Enforcement Officer Tracey Levering referred to her written report. Mrs. Kulesa asked about the skunk infestation in the Borough and several suggestions were discussed such as placing trash in cans instead of bags, and residents ceasing to place cat food outside. It was noted that the Animal Rescue League will pick up stray cats, but only if they have been trapped by the resident; contractors will remove skunks but the cost is approximately \$90; skunks cannot be relocated but must be destroyed because of rabies concerns. No specific decisions were made, however Mr. Sichler and Mrs. Levering were asked to bring some recommendations to the next Council meeting.

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to accept the Chief Code Enforcement Officer's report. **Motion carried.**

Police Department – Chief Fabriziani referred to his written report and noted that there has been a significant increase in criminal arrests so far in 2011. Chief Fabriziani explained the source of some of the ongoing incidents and noted that officers continue to monitor areas of concern.

Moved by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to accept the Police Chief's Report. **Motion carried.**

Public Works – Public Works Director Dean Murray presented his written report. **Moved** by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to accept the Public Works Director's report. **Motion carried.**

Fire Department – Chief Burkholder distributed the Fire Department's 2010 Annual Report and also referred to his written report. With regard to the new ladder truck, Chief Burkholder stated that he has not received any specific information about the grant application, however that it looks very positive that West Reading will receive some funding.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to accept the Fire Chief's report. **Motion carried.**

Elm Street – Mr. Rohrbach reported that in addition to the \$30,000 that was presented by the Wyomissing Foundation, they have issued a challenge grant which means that the Wyomissing Foundation will match any funds received by Elm Street up to \$17,500. He noted that \$7500 has been pledged so far.

Also reported was the opening of the Community Garden which will occur on April 16th. Mr. Rohrbach noted that on that day at 1:00 p.m., a plaque will be dedicated in memory of Lori Weidenhammer, a member of the NAC who passed away last year.

Also noted were the façade grants that are currently available, the street pots that are being planted and the Earth Day Cleanup which is scheduled for April 30th. And as a final note Mr. Rohrbach stated that West Reading is a Tree City USA again, having lost the designation more than 10 years ago because of a membership lapse. April 30th has been designated as Arbor Day in the Borough as part of the Earth

Day events. **Moved** by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve the Elm Street Manager's report. **Motion carried.**

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:

Safety Committee – **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to accept the Safety Committee report. **Motion carried.**

Recreation Commission – Ms. Klahr asked for approval to hire the summer employees. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the list of summer employees as presented by the Recreation Commission. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Recreation Commission report. **Motion carried.**

Planning Commission – Mr. Wert stated that there were no action items from the Planning Commission and that the discussion had been about various zoning issues, as noted in the minutes. **Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to accept the Planning Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

Traffic and Infrastructure Committee – Mr. Sichler reported that a resident of Sunset Road had attended the meeting and spoke about the traffic light at Sycamore Road and Museum Road, specifically that the light is so short that turning from Sycamore onto Museum Road southbound is almost impossible. Mr. Sichler stated that the Committee recommended that a traffic study be completed for that intersection. Chief Fabrizio added that the PennDOT permit for that intersection is probably thirty years old and should be updated. It was decided that Mr. Naugle would obtain pricing for the study and it would be left to Mr. Sichler's discretion to award the project. **Moved** by Mr. Gallen and seconded by Mr. Wert to authorize Mr. Sichler to proceed with the traffic study at a cost not to exceed \$5,000. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Ms. Good-Ashman to approve the Traffic Committee report. **Motion carried.**

Infrastructure Committee – Water and sewer rates were discussed earlier in the meter and there was no written report to approve.

Shade Tree Commission – Mrs. Heckler stated that the reference to a maple tree in the minutes is incorrect. It is actually a Linden tree. **Moved** by Ms. Good-Ashman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Shade Tree Commission report. **Motion carried.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the revenue report for the two months ending February 28, 2011. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve the Payment Approval Report for 2/12/11 to 3/10/11. **Motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. Conrad stated that he had been questioned about the Belovich development, where things stand and why the Borough can't take care of some issues such as paving of the streets. Mr. Conrad said that his reply had been that the development is in the bank's hands and that the streets and infrastructure are not owned by the Borough.

Mr. Becker noted that there are things that the Borough can do using escrow funds, however it is not in the best interest of the Borough to do so. The bank's position with regard to the property was also discussed. No recommendations were made at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council recessed to Executive Session at 8:35p.m. to discuss personnel. When Council reconvened at 9:27 p.m. the following action was taken. **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Conrad to authorize the Chief, the Mayor and the solicitor to take action on the personnel matter as directed in the executive session. **Voting yes – Ms. Hutcheson, Mr. Gallen, Ms. Good-Ashman, Mrs. Heckler, Mr. Wert, and Mr. Conrad. Voting no – Mrs. Kulesa. Motion carried 5-1.**

ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant