

## BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

**July 18, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.**

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Wednesday, July 18, 2017 with the following persons present: Council President Carl G. Garman, Vice President Nathalie Kulesa, Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr., Council Members Grace M. Craze, Christopher C. Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson, Solicitor Charles Haws, Police Chief Stephen D. Powell, Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler, Public Works Director Dean Murray, Recreation Director Helen Moyer, Engineer Tom Unger, Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach, Main Street Manager Mark Ratcliffe, Deputy Fire Chief Chad Moyer, Borough Manager Cathy L. Hoffman and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia Madeira.

<b>VISITORS:</b>	Karen Livingood	Resident
	Doug Zeeger	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Andrew Kearney	Resident
	Robin Ambrosiani	Resident
	Jay Esterly	Property/Business Owner
	Tina Shenk	Property/Business Owner
	Ok Grim	Property/Business Owner
	Holly Brock	Property/Business Owner
	Michael Lazarchick	Property/Business Owner
	Reading Eagle Reporter	

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Carl G. Garman called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Rambo spoke about code violations that remain in her neighborhood.

Mr. Esterly requested permission to pave a 25' x 65' alley behind the 300 block of Tulpehocken Avenue primarily used by Esterly Concrete. Mr. Wert requested he attend the next Traffic and Infrastructure meeting to obtain information on how to proceed.

Mrs. Livingood complimented the Police Department on parking enforcement along Sycamore Road during street sweeping as well as the Public Works Department for their quick response to her request to turn the water off for repairs to her home and restoration of service.

3. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Motion to approve the Council minutes of June 20, 2017. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to approve the Council minutes of June 27, 2017. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to approve the Liquor License Transfer Hearing minutes of June 20, 2017. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

4. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

There were no action items.

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Land Acquisition from RDC Realco, LLC:** Mr. Haws spoke of the two lot, tax free transfer Agreement of Sale per Council's request. The Agreement will be provided to RDC Realco for their execution.
- b. **Spruce Street Water Project** – Due to the bids that were received exceeding the budgeted amount by more than \$100,000 and information not yet tabulated for the 6 month review of revenues and expenditures a determination could not be made. A special Finance Committee meeting will be held on July 25, 2017 while Financial Specialist Donal Renninger is in office.
- c. **Chestnut Street Sidewalk Project** – Mr. Rohrbach's request to allocate \$8,500 to prepare bid specifications for this project also could not be determined until the 6 month revenues and expenditure information is received.
- d. **Fall Festival Request re Closure of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue** – Speaking on behalf of Chief Burkholder and the West Reading Fire Department, Mr. Moyer opposed closure of this main emergency services thoroughfare. Council agreed and denied the request.
- e. **Parkview Road Bridge** – Mr. Unger reported the following information for consideration:
  - Cost to close the bridge by installing signage and barriers would be approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000. However, they cannot guarantee the bridge would be able to remain open for pedestrian use in excess of five years.
  - Demolition would cost approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000.

Questions arose regarding the County's regulations on use of Liquid Fuels funding to potentially demolish the bridge and construct a pedestrian bridge as well as length of time to utilize the funds. Mrs. Hoffman will research this information for next month's meeting.

Motion to reject the Parkview Road Bridge bids of June 16, 2017. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Parking** – Mr. Lincoln spoke of a pending agreement with Equus Capital to allow Borough use of 175 spaces in the parking lot adjacent to McDonalds as a short-term parking solution at no cost to the Borough.

Also, there were lengthy discussions regarding the Walker Parking Consultants Proposal for Parking Planning Study Services and the scope of services recommended by the Traffic Committee.

- **Task 1: Review and Update 2015 Supply/Demand Findings** – The previous 2015 study was performed during winter months/off peak season. The Traffic Committee requests Council's approval to allow the updated study to be performed during the current peak summer season. The \$5,500 fee for this task would be compensated within the current budget of \$7000.
- **Task 4A: Parking Meter Study** – Council discussed in length the necessity of performing this \$13,400 task, suggesting business owners provide their input and the potential of awaiting the updated study to proceed. Mr. Garman suggested earmarking funds from the business privilege tax to cover this study within the current budget.

Walker Parking Consultants will be asked to attend their next meeting to discuss items such as study area, timing, etc.

Motion to approve Task 1 and 4A as recommended by the Traffic Committee, earmarking funds from the business privilege tax. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Wert. **In favor of the motion** - Mr. Imbesi, Mr. Wert, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Garman. **Against the motion** – Ms. Thompson, Mrs. Kulesa and Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 4-3.**

6. **CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:**

a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Haws had no additional report to give other than items found elsewhere on the agenda. Motion to approve the Solicitor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

b. **Engineer/Code Enforcement Report** – Mr. Unger spoke about the following:

- Alley Sewer and Paving bid documents have been prepared and recommended authorization to execute contracts and give notice to proceed.

Motion to authorize signature and give notice to proceed of Contract A - Alley Sewer and Paving project to A.H. Moyer. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to authorize signature and give notice to proceed of Contract B – Unnamed Alley Paving project to H&K Group. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Unger noted the start date and preconstruction meeting to take place next week with a work completion date in August.

Motion to accept the Engineer/Code Enforcement Report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

7. **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:**

a. **Wyomissing Creek Watershed Coalition Cooperation Agreement** – Mrs. Hoffman noted that Council had previously approved funding for necessary MS4 projects. Request authorization to advertise the ordinance to enter into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement.

Motion to advertise Wyomissing Creek Watershed Coalition Ordinance. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to approve the Borough Manager's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

8. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Rodriguez gave a verbal report on his attendance at two Council meetings, a WRCRF meeting and Traffic meeting. The Mayor noted his request earlier tonight to the Solicitor to review a case law relevant to Borough Code Section 1007 regarding the Mayor's duties to enforce ordinances and Borough regulations. The Solicitor recommended the Mayor assist residents with complaints in directing them to the Code Department but that Council had already determined how the Code Enforcement Department administers enforcement. The Mayor noted he might evoke his right to pursue outside legal advice and expend Borough funds from the general fund up to \$4,000 as allowed under the Borough Code.

Mr. Garman noted a system is currently in place with a contractor to administer code enforcement. Mrs. Hoffman stated the code department is effective in performing their duties despite comments to the contrary and noted if issues are seemingly not being dealt with it is due to one of three things:

- Ordinance limitations on ability to enforce
- Enforcement is currently in progress
- Necessity to prioritize due to understaffing

Also, they are currently working on enacting new ordinances to expand their ability to enforce common complaints within the Borough.

Motion to approve the Mayor's Report. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

9. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell referred to his written report and noted the following:

- One item for executive session regarding contract negotiation.
- The current Parking Enforcement Officer will be on leave for surgery lasting approximately 6-10 weeks. Retired Officer David Brown has agreed to serve as Parking Enforcement Officer in the interim. Request permission to bring Mr. Brown on board part-time, not to exceed 30 hours per week at \$12-\$13 per hour with funding from the part-time officer funds.

Motion to approve the part-time Parking Enforcement Officer for 6-10 weeks. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to approve the Police Department Report. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

b. **Public Works** – Mr. Murray referred to the written report and the following items were discussed:

- Mr. Imbesi noted a street patch opening in the vicinity of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Franklin Street. Mr. Murray stated this would be addressed with a camera to view the underground catch basin to properly fill the void.
- Mr. Garman noted a recently planted tree along S. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue where rain events have eroded the soil to expose tree roots. Mr. Murray stated this was brought to his attention earlier today and will be addressed.

Motion to approve the Public Works Department Report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

c. **Fire Department** – Mr. Moyer referred to the written report. Mrs. Kulesa inquired as to progress on flow testing. Mr. Murray reported testing has begun and is awaiting further information from ISO to coordinate reporting of the results.

Motion to approve the Fire Department Report. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation**

- **Elm Street** - Mr. Rohrbach reported the S. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue sidewalk project is underway and noted DCED has requested to attend a ribbon cutting ceremony upon completion of this project. The anticipated project completion date is in August and requests the Shade Tree Commission to approve and plant trees prior to this ceremony. Also, he is awaiting approval of additional funding for the Chestnut Street project to place this project out for bid.

Motion to approve the Elm Street Manager's Reports **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- **Main Street** – Mr. Ratcliffe reported he is awaiting numbers to report on the Art on the Avenue event. Planning for the Fall Festival event is in full swing and information is available on the lovewestreading.org website. The visitors guide is currently being revamped. The Holiday Glow schedule is in the planning stages with a half dozen events currently planned. The Cruisin' on the Avenue event will take place the first weekend of September.

Motion to approve Main Street Manager's Report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

10. **COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer referred to her written report and thanked all volunteers for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event.

Motion to approve the Recreation Director's Report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert noted the conditional use hearing planned for this evening for Mobilitie to install an additional wireless communication facility was cancelled due to a conflict with an agreement to attach to a metal Met-Ed light pole. Also, noted Systems Design Engineering has provided helpful recommendations that will be discussed during the next meeting on potential zoning district amendments.

Motion to approve the Planning Commission Report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert referred to the minutes of July 10, and there were no further questions.

Motion to approve the Economic Development Report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Environmental Advisory Council** – Mr. Wert noted a tree grant opportunity that is being pursued from the Arbor Day Foundation and Ms. Heister is currently making amendments as requested by the Foundation. The Adopt-a-Block program is being delayed due to time restrictions until Spring to enable coordination with the Recreation Department.

Motion to approve the Environmental Advisory Council Report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Graze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- e. **Traffic and Infrastructure Committees** – Mr. Lincoln referred to July's draft minutes.

Mr. Wert noted the installation of a sign at the intersection of N. 6<sup>th</sup> and Reading Avenues preventing cars from parking within the line of sight has been helpful and inquired as to the possibility of installing a traffic signal at this intersection.

Motion to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Reports. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – Mr. Murray referred to the draft minutes of the July 11 meeting and there were no further questions.

Motion to approve the Shade Tree Commission Report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- g. **Finance Committee** – Ms. Thompson reported that the Committee met on July 17 and discussed the financial reports and the creation of a budget within the Police Department for Crime Watch.

Motion to approve the verbal Finance Committee Report of July 17, 2017. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- h. **Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray referred to the minutes of the June 27 meeting and there were no further questions.

Motion to approve the Safety Committee Report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

11. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Revenues with Comparison to Budget** – Ms. Craze inquired as to a Police Department maintenance and repairs expenditure. Chief Powell reported this was for cabling upgrade and installation of Administration Office door lock.

Motion to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget Report of 6/30/17. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Payment Approval Report 6/21/17 to 7/13/17 & 7/14/17 to 7/18/17** - Ms. Craze inquired as to the Fire Department bed slide expenditure. Mr. Moyer noted a sliding mechanism was installed on the truck to allow better access to the equipment.

Motion to approve the Payment Approval Reports of 6/21/17 to 7/13/17 & 7/14/17 to 7/18/17. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

12. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to executive session at 9:45 p.m. When Council reconvened at 10:01 p.m. Mr. Garman stated they discussed an employee contract item and there was no action needed at this time.

13. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Rambo thanked Mrs. Hoffman for sharing procedural information regarding code enforcement and noted the professionalism of each individual in the code enforcement office.

Mrs. Livingood also noted the professionalism of the code enforcement department and the need for additional ordinances/regulations. Also, Mrs. Livingood expressed her dissatisfaction with the ability of the Mayor to expend \$4,000 on outside legal advice and understands this may not be able to be eliminated, however she requests this amount be reduced in future budgets. Mr. Garman and Mr. Haws noted the Borough Code dictates that amount and it cannot be changed.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:03 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze.  
**Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Cynthia Madeira  
Assistant to the Manager