

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

February 15, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, February 15, 2011 with the following persons present: Council President Kevin Conrad; Vice President Philip Wert; Council Members Nathalie Kulesa, Elizabeth Heckler, Deborah Hutcheson; Mayor Shane Keller; Borough Manager Richard Sichler; Police Chief Edward Fabriziani; Socrates Georgeadis, 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. Fire Chief Mark Burkholder arrived at 8:10 p.m. Absent: James Gallen, Amy Good-Ashman.

<u>VISITORS:</u>	Ruth Cardell	Temple
	Tina Shenk	Property/Business Owner
	Bryce Matthews	Property Owner
	Robin Ambrosiani	Resident
	Suzanne Thompson	Resident
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Darrin Youcker	Reading Eagle
	Sorita Fitzgerald	Resident
	Rebecca Doubeck	Resident
	Karen Rightmire	Wyomissing Foundation Executive Director
	John Weidenhammer	Wyomissing Foundation Chairman
	Kyle & Kent Lazor	Independence Lighting

Council President Kevin Conrad called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

WYOMISSING FOUNDATION PRESENTATION:

Karen Rightmire explained the history behind the Wyomissing Foundation and said that the Foundation was very pleased to fund the two projects which had been requested by Elm Street and the Recreation Department.

Mr. Rohrbach explained that funding for the creation of the Center Point Neighborhood was not approved this year by the State therefore the funds donated by the Wyomissing Foundation will be used to move ahead with the goals even though it will not receive the “Center Point” designation. These goals will be to foster resident leadership, implement a façade improvement program, hire engineers to prepare the plans for the streetscape improvements, etc. This will also strengthen the application to the State next year. Ms. Klahr stated that the Recreation project will be to install 15 security cameras throughout the West Reading Park which will be monitored 24 hours per day.

Mr. Conrad thanked the Foundation for their generosity and Mr. Weidenhammer replied that they are very interested in what the Borough is doing from an economic development and revitalization standpoint and look forward to seeing more of the great work that the Borough is already doing. Mr. Conrad also thanked Robin Ambrosiani and Bryce Matthews of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee for their assistance in obtaining the funds from the Wyomissing Foundation.

WEST READING MERCHANTS CALENDAR OF EVENTS – 2011:

Rebecca Doubeck was on hand to review a list of proposed events for 2011, some of which require Council's approval for various aspects of the events. She said that the list was compiled with the assistance of the West Reading Business Association. The events that do not require any approvals from Council include "Wine on Wednesdays", "First Thursdays", Carriage Rides, "Ride for Live", Sidewalk Sales, "Taste of West Reading", and "Boo on the Avenue".

These events will require Council's approval:

1. "Art on the Avenue" (June 18th) – Penn Avenue closure from the 700 block to the middle of the 400 block, and permission for a beer tent,
2. "Fall Festival" (September 17th) – Closure of Penn Avenue from the 700 block to the middle of the 400 block; also permission for the beer tent,
3. "Run Santa Run" (December 3rd) – Closure of Penn Avenue from the 700 block to the middle of the 400 block.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the street closure for "Art on the Avenue" (June 18th), the 700 block to the middle of the 400 block and approval for the beer tent; the closure of Penn Avenue from the 700 block to the middle of the 400 block for the "Fall Festival" (September 17th), including a beer tent; and the street closure for the "Run, Santa Run" event on December 3rd, from the 300 block to the 800 block of Penn Avenue. **Motion carried.**

Any remaining approvals or changes can be dealt with by Chief Fabrizio or Mayor Keller. It was also noted that the necessary liquor licenses must be obtained through the West Reading Main Street Foundation.

PUBLIC COMMENT: - There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the minutes of January 18th, 2011. **Motion carried.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Penn Avenue Streetscape Improvements – Mr. Sichler said there was nothing new to present.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Susquehanna Municipal Trust Resolution - Mr. Georgeadis said that he had been asked to review the Susquehanna Trust which is consortium of municipalities throughout south central Pennsylvania that are pooling resources to reduce the costs for workers' compensation. He said he had reviewed the proposed ordinance and found the agreement to be acceptable with three questions/comments. If a decision is made to join the consortium, the Borough will be locked in for 2 years. Then if we decide to leave, a letter of credit must be posted to ensure that any liability issues that the Borough might have incurred are covered. Lastly, he asked if their track record has been scrutinized to determine if there are

actual savings. Mr. Sichler responded that after reviewing the numbers, the savings would be significant. Mr. Georgeadis noted that the risk the Borough would face is if one of the other members of the consortium were to sustain a major workers' comp incident which would drive up the costs for all of the other members.

It was noted that the consortium has been in existence for quite some time and after some discussion it was decided to move forward with the advertising of the ordinance, however a final decision will not be made until the March meeting. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to advertise Ordinance 995, which is an ordinance authorizing the Borough of West Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania, to join with other political subdivisions as a member of the Susquehanna Municipal Trust to enter into an intergovernmental agreement for the purpose of joining the Trust and to participate as a member of the Trust. **Motion carried.**

Pension Ordinance – Mr. Conrad asked for an Executive Session prior to any discussion taking place concerning the Pension ordinance.

CONSULTANTS' REPORTS:

Engineer's Report – Mr. Conrad introduced Terry Naugle as the new municipal representative from Great Valley Consultants. He will be attending all Council meetings to provide the Engineer's Report. He also noted that Mr. Naugle has been working with the Codes office for several years.

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

Solicitor's Report – Mr. Georgeadis announced that on February 1st and 9th, Borough Council had met in Executive Session to discuss the collective bargaining issues, with no action taken.

Mr. Georgeadis also noted that PennDOT has requested that all municipalities update their Airport Zoning ordinances, and because West Reading is in the flight path of the Reading Airport, the ordinance must be updated. An updated version has been prepared, and after reviewing the document, both Mr. Georgeadis and Mr. Sichler recommend adoption of the ordinance, essentially as a housekeeping item.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the advertising of the amended Airport Zoning Ordinance. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Georgeadis asked about the Environmental Advisory Council and noted that he had provided Mr. Sichler with a copy of a proposed resolution. Mr. Wert recommended that the composition of the Council consist of three residents (who have already volunteered), the Borough Manager and the fifth a member of Council or member of the Planning Commission. He suggested that if more people want to get involved, more members could be added at a later date. It was decided that the proposed resolution would be reviewed at the next meeting and appointments to the EAC would be made at that time.

As a final note Mr. Georgeadis stated that he had 2 items for Executive Session, one being ongoing litigation and the other collective bargaining.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the Solicitor's report. **Motion carried.**

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:

TCC Agreement (to terminate prior year tax collection) – Mr. Sichler stated that the County is moving toward a single unified tax collection for income tax, local services tax and business privilege tax. As part of this process the Borough must sever the agreement with the previous tax collector. **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to authorize the Borough Manager to sign Exhibit 'C' which is the 'Taxing Authorities Terminating Agreements Collector for 2011 Tax Collection per Tax Collection Agreement § 14(d)'. **Motion carried.**

Water and Sewer Rates –Mr. Sichler stated that the former engineer Darryl Jenkins had prepared a report based on what the Borough currently pays for water and sewer, as well as what neighboring municipalities such as Shillington and Wyomissing pay, given that they receive water from the same source that the Borough does and sewage treatment is also provided by the same treatment plant. Also taken into consideration were the expenses that the Borough incurs for maintaining the infrastructure required for the collection and distribution systems. The goal was to balance the funds so that both would be self supporting, therefore the recommendation is to increase sewer rates by 20% and water rates by 10%. After much discussion it was decided that the information be presented to the Infrastructure Committee at their March meeting and that a recommendation be brought back to Council for consideration.

Yard Waste- Mr. Sichler told Council that the Borough does not have a system in place to collect yard waste therefore residents place their yard waste in trash bags which is then taken to the landfill. A Penn State (Berks) student organization has received a grant from Sam's Club and is interested in taking on an environmental project with the Borough. Preliminary discussions have suggested that the students obtain brown yard waste bags with instructions attached for distribution to residents. As well, it was suggested that a staff person be available at the Borough garage for 4 hours on a Saturday morning to accept yard waste and to have the chipper available for chipping of large branches/bushes, etc. Discussion ensued regarding the continuation of the project once the grant funds are exhausted and it was suggested that residents would purchase their own bags. As well, the cost for having a staff person on site would be offset by the tipping fees that would be reduced.

Dean Rohrbach stated that the Elm Street Newsletter will be distributed to almost 600 people on Wednesday and that it contains an article regarding this subject. He added that Elm Street is prepared to write grants to keep the project going and suggested that they may be able to provide bags to residents at a reduced cost. It was also suggested that assistance could come from the 'Safe, Clean and Green' Committee as well as the Environmental Advisory Council.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the yard waste program as presented by the Borough Manager. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to accept the Borough Manager's report. **Motion carried.**

MAYOR'S REPORT AND MAIN STREET REPORT:

Mayor Keller stated that as of the last Main Street meeting he has been named the Chairman of the Main Street Authority and President of the Main Street Foundation. John Woodward stepped down as Chairman of the Authority so he could focus his attention on Elm Street activities.

Mayor Keller also stated that he would work with Mr. Rohrbach and Ms. Weidner to include the Main Street minutes in the Council packets. He said this was being done in response to a request by Mrs. Heckler to ensure that Council is apprised of Main Street activities.

Moved by Mr. Wert 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. Some discussion ensued regarding repairs that were recently completed for the 2001 Dodge truck that has almost depleted the budgeted amount for the year. Chief Fabrizio suggested that preventative maintenance may not have been completed as often as it should have been.

Also mentioned were the 109 snow removal violations that were issued in January.

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

Police Department – Chief Fabrizio spoke about recent criminal activity trends and noted that to date there have been 49 criminal arrests, including rapes, a home invasion, drug activity and situations that could have ended with homicides. He also noted that activity at the Diner has increased again.

Moved by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to accept the Police Chief's Report. **Motion carried.**

Public Works – Public Works Director Dean Murray presented his written report. Mr. Conrad commended Mr. Murray, Chad Moyer, Kerry Grassley and Mike Jacko for working through the night in very cold weather to repair a water main break on Linden Lane. **Moved** by Mrs. Heckler and seconded by Mr. Wert to accept the Public Works Director's report. **Motion carried.**

Fire Department – Chief Burkholder presented his written report which was distributed at the meeting. He noted that bid documents were prepared for the new ladder truck, bids were received, opened, and reviewed however there are key pieces of information that have not been received, such as the status of the grant application, therefore everything has been tabled for now.

Chief Burkholder reported that Tom Bausher from West Side EMA had requested a meeting between West Reading, Wyomissing and Spring Townships' Fire Departments to discuss future plans and apparatus needs. They will continue to meet for these discussions.

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

Elm Street – Mr. Rohrbach read information from his 4th quarter report, as distributed to Council. He also highlighted the 2010 accomplishments as well as the Five Year Revitalization Results. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to accept the Elm Street Manager’s Report. **Motion carried.**

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:

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

Recreation Commission – Ms. Klahr announced that the Borough has been the recipient of two State Awards:

1. Youth Fitness Program of the Year Award - for our collaboration with the United States Marine Corp for the Marines and Me program.
2. Public/Private Partnership of the Year Award – awarded to Kuhn Funeral Home and the Reading Hospital.

There will be a banquet in March to present these awards. Ed Kuhn, along with a representative from the Reading Hospital will be attending.

Ms. Klahr also reported that the last phase of the playground project is the installation of a solar light that will replace the existing light located at the bridge across from the swimming pool. Part of the project was a “green” component, and the solar light is that component. She introduced Kyle and Kent Lazor from Independent Lighting who were on hand to answer any questions. She added that eventually there will be a security camera at that location. Once this portion of the work is completed, the Borough will be able to request grant reimbursement from the State. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to approve the installation of the light. **Motion carried.**

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

Planning Commission – Mr. Wert stated that the Planning Commission continues to work on zoning items with Great Valley Consultants and a preliminary plan approval has been given for the Kuhn Funeral Home expansion. No action will be taken until Final Plan approval. **Moved** by Ms. Hutcheson and seconded by Mr. Wert to accept the Planning Commission Report. **Motion carried.**

Shade Tree Commission – Mr. Sichler said that the Commission discussed trimming projects and continues to work on cataloguing trees in the Borough. They are also looking at which varieties of trees should be used in future to have a more unified look on various blocks. During discussion it was noted that the contractors who trimmed trees on Oak Terrace was in contravention of the ordinance because they stapled signs to the tree.

Amber Rambo, Shade Tree Commission member spoke about a portion of the ordinance which states that no work shall be done to any Borough tree unless there is a member of the Shade Tree Commission is there to oversee the work. Mr. Sichler said that the Commission will be reviewing the ordinance at their next meeting.

Moved by Mr. Wert 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 month ending January 31, 2011. **Motion carried.**

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Hutcheson to approve the Payment Approval Report for 1/15/11 to 2/11/11. **Motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Council recessed to Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. to contractual issues and possible litigation. When Council reconvened at 9:38 p.m. no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT:

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to adjourn the meeting at 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant