

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

JUNE 17, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, June 17, 2008 with the following persons present: Council Vice-President Michael Doyle; Council Members James Gallen Jr., Michael Geddio, Michael Morrill, Philip Wert; Mayor Shane Keller; Borough Manager George Tindall; Borough Solicitor Socrates Georgeadis; Police Chief Ed Fabriziani; Code Enforcement Officer Gerald Trate, Borough Foreman Jim Beane; Recreation Coordinator Daphne Klahr; Main Street Executive Director Nevin Hollinger; Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach; Administrative Assistant Cathy Hoffman. (This meeting was immediately preceded by a Public Hearing regarding a conditional use application for the property at 501 Penn Avenue.)

VISITORS: Jeff Cullen – 630 Penn Avenue
Lori & David Weidenhammer – 237 Chestnut Street
Ruth Cardell – 728 Reading Avenue
Barbara Cafurello – 48 Woodland Road, Wyomissing
Bonnie Batdorf – 384 Oak Terrace
Sheila Scott – 322 Chestnut Street
Elizabeth Heckler – 460 Chestnut Street
Darren Youker – Reading Eagle
Deborah Hutcheson – 512 Penn Avenue
Doug Wesner – Westside Weekly
Rebecca Keller – 395 Oak Terrace
Eddie Daniels – 605 Penn Avenue
Kurt Bertges – 450 Penn Avenue
Don Haines – 156B West Fulton Street
Fritz Korper – 510 Franklin Street
Darryl Jenkins – Great Valley Consultants

Council Vice-President Michael Doyle called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. A moment of silence was observed in lieu of an invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Bill Murray of 320 S. Park Road spoke about the upcoming referendum regarding the Wyomissing Area School District's plans to build a new elementary school in West Reading. Mr. Murray said he represented the "Vote No" group which is in opposition for many reasons including the \$37 million proposed cost. Barbara Cafurello also spoke in favor of the 'no' vote and asked for West Reading's support on this issue.

Fritz Korper of 510 Franklin Street told Council about the ongoing problem with his water/sewer bill – that his daughter owns the property (2 units) but doesn't pay the utility bill therefore he must pay for both units or risk having his water shut off. He said there was an ongoing civil issue with his daughter and that the property is currently in foreclosure. After some discussion, it was decided that Mr. Georgeadis would do some follow-up with the daughter's lawyer and Mr. Korper was told that in the interim, his water would not be shut off.

Kurt Bertges of 450 Penn Avenue spoke about the sign fee invoices that have recently been issued to all businesses. He stated that the \$100 initial sign fee should be sufficient and that a \$50 per sign per year fee was exorbitant.

APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council approved the Council minutes of May 20th 2008.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION FOR 501 PENN AVENUE:

On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Conditional Use Application for the property at 501 Penn Avenue to add a second floor to the existing structure, as discussed at the Public Hearing of June 17th at 6:30 p.m. (Mr. Morrill abstained as he was not in attendance for the Public Hearing.)

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT:

Parkview Road Bridge - Mr. Tindall reported that he and Mr. Jenkins had met with Mr. Wescott, the County engineer to discuss the Parkview Road Bridge. They specifically talked about the possibility of taking off the top layer to look at the condition of the bridge underneath. Mr. Wescott stated that it was a reasonable course of action to take and that it would be covered under the liquid fuel funds that have been set aside for the bridge. It was decided that they would piggyback this work with the road work on Museum Road to keep costs as low as possible and avoid having to bid out the work. Therefore the surface of the bridge will be milled down to the concrete in either August or September, in conjunction with the Museum Road project. It was also noted that \$388,000 still remains as part of the original grant to the Borough for the Parkview Road Bridge.

Center for Community Leadership of Berks County – Letter re: Philip Wert - Mr. Tindall read the letter regarding Mr. Wert receiving his “Master Planner” certification. Council congratulated Mr. Wert on his achievement.

Resolution 2008-3 (Fix rates for sewer surcharges) Mr. Tindall explained that these rates pertain only to four businesses that have industrial discharge into the sewer system and that the rates are set by the Joint Municipal Authority of Wyomissing Valley. **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council approved Resolution 2008-3, to fix rates for sewer surcharges.**

Main Street Phases 4 & 5 – Mr. Tindall explained that bids for these projects were received on June 11th and that both came in over budget. Phase 4 was budgeted at \$125,000 but came in at \$137,710; Phase 5 was budgeted at \$335,000 but came in at \$353,897.20. He said that he is waiting for word from Alan Piper of the Berks County Planning Commission regarding possible funds that could be allocated to bridge the gap. The other alternative is to take funds from Phase 6 (\$115,000 for the beautification of the 200 block of Penn Avenue), but it would take Council and PennDot’s approval to do so. Mr. Tindall recommended waiting for word from Mr. Piper before any action is taken. He also explained that projected costs for these projects were set in 2004, which explains why they are coming back over budget.

Sign Ordinance – Mr. Tindall noted that Council had been sent the sign ordinance information and further direction was needed in order to proceed. The ordinance would require all businesses to pay a \$50 per year, per sign fee. It was noted that the fees were initially proposed by the Mayor’s committee in 2006. Mr. Morrill explained that the purpose of the sign ordinance, when proposed, was to monitor signs in the Borough and increase revenue.

Discussion ensued regarding the initial sign fee, and what types of changes to signs would constitute additional fees being charged. Mr. Bertges recommended that if changes were necessary to avoid sign pollution, he recommended that discussions be held with business owners and ensure that there is a clear definition of signage. Mr. Gallen added that signs need to be scrutinized to ensure that they are in keeping with existing regulations or are removed for non-compliance.

It was decided that the proposed ordinance, as currently written, would not be passed. It was also recommended that Main Street look at the issue with Mr. Hollinger reporting back to Council.

Equipment Auction – Mr. Tindall announced that several pieces of equipment had recently been sent to auction in Exeter and that the Borough had received a total of \$13,352.50. It was noted that this money had not been anticipated at budget time.

DEP Grant Reimbursement for Leaf-Vac – Mr. Tindall stated that \$25,000 had finally been received from DEP as reimbursement for the purchase of the leaf-vac through a grant that had been initially applied for in 2006. He noted that the purchase of the leaf-vac had been budgeted under capital, in the event that the grant had not been approved.

On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Morrill and passed, Council approved the Borough Manager's Report.

ENGINEER'S REPORT:

Mr. Jenkins reported that the paving on Franklin Street will be completed this week and the paving of the walking trail has been advertised for bid (\$19,000 is being provided by DCNR).

Mayor Keller asked about the status of the traffic control devices for the Belovich townhomes and commented that signs have not been installed as yet. Mr. Jenkins stated that he would check into it.

Mr. Doyle stated that there is a problem with the traffic light at Parkside Drive North at Museum Road, that vehicles coming from Sycamore never have an opportunity to turn left. Chief Fabrizio stated that he would contact Telco to check it. Mr. Gallen also mentioned the timing for the light at that same intersection and Chief Fabrizio stated that PennDot sets the timing for that light and previous requests to change it have been denied based on the traffic counts at the intersection. Chief Fabrizio suggested that District 5 could be contacted to review that issue again.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Engineer's Report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER'S REPORT:

Mr. Trate had nothing to add to the written report and there were no questions, therefore **on motion duly made by Mr. Geddio, seconded by Mr. Gallen and passed, Council approved the Code Enforcement Officer's Report.**

Mr. Wert commented that he preferred the expanded version of Mr. Trate's report and suggested that he continue to provide it in that manner.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Georgeadis stated that Council had received a copy of the ordinance that deals with property numbers being displayed at the rear of individual premises as well as the front, and that it is ready to be advertised. **On motion duly made by Mr. Geddio, seconded by Mr. Morrill and passed, Council approved the advertising of the ordinance.**

It was noted that residents need to be informed about this change, and that it could be announced in the newsletter, on the website, etc. This can also be dealt with when a property sells and a Certificate of Occupancy inspection is completed.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Solicitor's Report.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION REPORTS:

Traffic Committee – Mr. Tindall stated that there were no action items to report, and that the Committee would be meeting on June 18th.

Mayor Keller stated that the May 21st minutes didn't reflect the fact that Mr. Vincent Cerbone had stated he was representing PennDot as well as his wife when he attended the May meeting of the Traffic Committee. Mayor Keller said he felt that it was important that the minutes be amended to include this information. Chief Fabriziani added that the issue that Mr. Cerbone had brought to the meeting has been resolved – stall lines for three parking spaces were added at the old bus stop location on Penn Avenue at 7th Avenue.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Traffic Committee minutes, as amended.

Recreation Commission – Recreation Coordinator Daphne Klahr reviewed the list of upcoming events including the 4th of July events. She then requested approval for the hiring of a returning employee for the Concession stand at \$7.75/hr. **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the hiring of Gail Latham at \$7.75/hr.**

Ms. Klahr told Council that she had received a request from a Borough resident for financial assistance with the playground program. She noted that there is no established policy in this regard and therefore asked for Council's assistance. After some discussion, Council decided to take no action on this request. It was also suggested that the Recreation Commission prepare a policy.

Ms. Klahr reported that an emergency purchase was made for a new 20 gallon/hour pump to maintain the proper chlorine level in the main pool. She explained that the automated chlorinators are working properly, however the existing pump could only pump a maximum of 7 gallons of chlorine per hour and during specific conditions it may require up to 18 gallons per hour. The cost for the pump was \$1165. and it was noted that the old pump will be kept for emergency use.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Recreation Commission report.

Safety Committee – Mr. Tindall presented the May 16th minutes. **On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Safety Committee minutes of May 16th 2008.**

Planning Commission – Mr. Tindall stated that Mr. Siggins had chaired the meeting in Mr. Wert's absence and noted that the meeting dealt predominately with the conditional use request for 501 Penn Avenue.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Planning Commission report.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT:

In addition to his written report, Chief Fabriziani told Council about the following:

- A graffiti removal program will soon be introduced through the County that will make workers available to help remove graffiti from public and private property. Graffiti removal has been a priority for

the Borough since the ordinance went into effect. He will be meeting with the Graffiti Abatement Coordinator to discuss the program and will have more information for Council at the next meeting.

- There are some parking issues in the new townhouse development that will need to be dealt with.
- There are no street lights in the new townhouse development although much of the area has been occupied. This is a security issue that should be dealt with as soon as possible. Mr. Tindall suggested that a meeting be scheduled with John Belovich about this issue.

On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Police Chief's Report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Keller reviewed the following items:

- Mayor Keller recently participated in a ride-along with the police department which was very educational and recommended that Council participate as well.
- He urged residents to educate themselves about the upcoming school referendum and then vote on this important issue.
- A letter of commendation was received from the Mayor of Hamburg regarding Officer Wayne Holben and Canine Officer Dolfo, who participated in the search for an elderly missing person and were instrumental in finding him. Mayor Keller said he would be taking Officer Holben to Hamburg to receive the award (Honorable Service Ribbon) that he and Dolfo have been nominated for.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Mayor's Report.

BOROUGH FOREMAN'S REPORT:

Borough Foreman Jim Beane told Council that the water pump on the generator at Borough Hall needs to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$1200. Mr. Beane asked if this should be invested in the generator, or if a new generator should be purchased at about \$18,000. He asked for Council's approval to obtain pricing for the purchase. He noted that it would take about two months to obtain and install the new unit.

Chief Fabriziani noted that Borough Hall can't be used as a Local Operations Center if the generator is not functioning, which is critical in the event of an emergency when power is disrupted. He noted that having a working generator is absolutely vital to the Police Department and in the case of any prolonged emergency. He suggested that there might be some grant funds available from Emergency Management, because of the LOC designation.

Discussion ensued regarding the placement of a new generator, whether it should remain in the basement or located outside. Keeping it inside limits the size that can be placed there, and would require the generator to be installed in pieces. It was decided that some investigation will be done to determine what the needs are and will be reported at the next Council meeting.

On motion duly made by Mr. Wert, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Borough Foreman's Report.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:

Jim Beane presented the report however there were no questions therefore **on motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert, and passed, Council approved the Fire Chief's Report.**

MAIN STREET EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Nevin Hollinger presented his report and highlighted the upcoming "Art on the Avenue" event. He also thanked Mayor Keller and Mr. Conrad for attending the Pennsylvania Downtown Center leadership conference in Gettysburg.

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Wert and passed, Council approved the Main Street Executive Director's Report.

ELM STREET MANAGER'S REPORT:

Dean Rohrbach stated that the community garden is predominately rented, the tool shed is up and running, welcome signs have been installed, and new equipment has been received including a "Gator". He added that Elm Street has received a grant from 'Keep America Beautiful' to coordinate a cigarette litter prevention campaign. In addition to receiving funds, 1000 pocket ashtrays were provided.

On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Elm Street Manager's Report.

REVENUES WITH COMPARISON TO BUDGET – ENDING 5/31/08:

On motion duly made by Mr. Morrill, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Revenues Report for the five months ending 5/31/08.

PAYMENT APPROVAL REPORT - 5/20/08 TO 6/16/08:

On motion duly made by Mr. Gallen, seconded by Mr. Geddio and passed, Council approved the Payment Approval Report for 5/20/08 to 6/16/08.

ADJOURNMENT:

Council adjourned the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant

Approved by George I. Tindall
Borough Manager/Secretary