

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

July 28, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its second regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, July 28, 2015 with the following persons present: Council President Philip C. Wert; Vice President Carl G. Garman; Council Members Elizabeth L. Heckler, Grace M. Craze, Nathalie R. Kulesa, Christopher C. Lincoln, Suzanne Thompson; Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr.; Borough Manager Richard J. Sichler; Police Chief Stephen D. Powell; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Administrative Assistant Cathy L. Hoffman.

VISITORS:	Jim & Karen Livingood	Residents
	Tina Shenk	Property Owner
	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Andrew Wagaman	Reading Eagle
	Dave Langley	WEEU-AM
	Patrick Leaman	Sinking Spring
	John Eustice	Reading 120
	Craig Peiffer	Reading 120
	Helen Moyer	Recreation

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Council President Philip C. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Tina Shenk spoke about her concerns regarding the detours on Penn Avenue that prevent left turns onto 3rd and 4th Avenues. She indicated that many of her customers are continuing to turn left because they have not seen the signage and recommended that more signage is necessary. She also spoke about the 400 block of Penn Avenue not being included in the Fall Festival because PennDOT will not permit that block to be closed down because it is part of the detour.

Mr. Sichler spoke about his discussions with PennDOT and noted that if that block were to be closed down, it would become the Borough's liability, and in a dangerous situation, it would have to be opened immediately.

Ms. Shenk noted that in her discussions with the Borough it was stated that the 'no left turn' stipulation may be revisited by PennDOT once school is back in session in September. She hoped that Mr. Sichler would encourage them to allow left turns on 4th which may allow that block to be closed down as part of the Fall Festival.

3. **READING 120 RACE:**

John Eustice, organizer of the Reading 120 Race which will be held on September 12th was on hand to discuss the impact the race will have on West Reading. This was a follow-up from the Council meeting where Council was asked to reconsider their approval of the Race pending more information being received. He noted that the race has been UCI sanctioned which is the highest level of cycle racing, that it is the greatest single day race in North America and spoke about the prestige of having a race of this caliber held in Berks County.

Of particular concern was the closing down of Penn Avenue for an extended period of time as well as the removal of vehicles from the parking spaces prior to the race which was what Council was told at the June meeting. Mr. Eustice indicated that cars parked along Penn Avenue do not have to be moved, and that the only inconvenience to the Borough would be the rolling stops on Penn Avenue for a total of 15

minutes which is the maximum that PennDOT will permit. He noted that they are in the process of ensuring that all 22 municipalities impacted by the race are approving the rolling closures and once the approvals are received, it will be submitted to PennDOT for their approval. Mr. Eustice noted that if Council doesn't feel that the having the race in West Reading was worth it, they will be happy to move it to another area next year.

Concerning the rolling closures, Mr. Eustice noted that intersections will be manned by volunteers and the Berks County Sheriff's Department who will stop the cross traffic. Six police officers will be required however to close all ramps of the cloverleaf at 422.

The economic impact of the race was discussed briefly and Mr. Eustice suggested that the merchants embrace the race to make it as big a draw as possible because race enthusiasts will most certainly be eating and shopping in West Reading. He referred to other municipalities that will be going all out for the event. Sinking Spring resident and cyclist Patrick Leaman, who was in attendance with Mr. Eustice, spoke about the feeling that the race evokes and felt certain that the streets of West Reading will be packed with race enthusiasts who will continue to spend the afternoon in the Borough once the race goes through. He said that the two best vantage points for the entire race in his opinion will be West Reading and the Pagoda.

The other issue of concern was insurance coverage and Mr. Eustice indicated that the race cannot happen with the necessary insurance coverage – that is a given because PennDOT will not approve it without insurance.

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to follow through with the prior approval as long as the conditions are addressed, to approve the Reading 120 race coming through West Reading.

Motion carried.

4. **Vehicle Sales** – Mr. Sichler indicated that the person who had the successful bid for the Charger has not contacted the Borough as yet. He stated that if the buyer doesn't follow through, the vehicle will be relisted. He added that there is a 10% bid deposit that the Borough can receive in a default situation, however this has never happened before.

Mr. Sichler said that he would like to have authorization to sell the old backhoe which has a trade-in value of \$29,000. He said he would list it at that price and if no one bids more than that, he will trade it in knowing that the Borough is receiving a fair price for it. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Heckler to authorize the Borough Manager to advertise the old backhoe for sale. **Motion carried.**

Also briefly discussed were the non-functioning cameras at the Park with regard to the recent vandalism at the Park, as well as updates to the Borough website and Facebook.

5. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. to discuss personnel. When the meeting reconvened at 8:09 p.m., the following action was taken:

- **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Thompson to grant the medical leave request make by the requesting officer for a period of two weeks. **Motion carried.**

15. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

James T. Rogers spoke about the lack of one-way signage at 3rd and Spruce and it was noted that Public Works has already installed another sign.

Tina Shenk asked if the 400 block of Cherry street could be used for the Fall Festival if the 400 block of Penn Avenue cannot be closed and it was the consensus that it would be permitted. The Mayor can issue the necessary closure order and Chief Powell indicated that they would not have any problems controlling pedestrian traffic. It was noted that the residents who have garages and parking areas on that block of Cherry would have to be notified. It was suggested that Main Street Manager Christin Kelley be contacted to coordinate that aspect of the event.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Mr. Garman and seconded by Ms. Craze to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hoffman
Administrative Assistant