

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

January 17, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, January 17, 2017 with the following persons present: Council President Carl G. Garman; Council Vice-President Nathalie Kulesa; Council Members Grace M. Craze; Suzanne Thompson; Kristin L. Kramer; Christopher C. Lincoln; Philip C. Wert; Borough Manager Cathy L. Hoffman; Police Chief Stephen D. Powell; Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Public Works Director Dean Murray; Solicitor Charles Haws ; Borough Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Engineer Tom Unger; and Administrative Assistant Cynthia J. Madeira. Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach and Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr. were unable to attend.

VISITORS:	James Rogers	Resident
	Karen Livingood	Resident
	Doug Zeeger	Resident
	Christina Shenk	Business Owner
	Jennifer Capone	Resident
	Danny Martinez	Resident
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Reporter	Reading Eagle

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The council meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call.

Mr. Garman recognized the passing of Narian Seepurshad. Mr. Seepurshad volunteered his time to keep our community a safer place by participating on our Crime Watch committee.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers stated that through a right-to-know request he had inquired as to Borough funds contributed to West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation from 2006 to 2016. Mr. Rogers wanted to ensure the public is aware the reports totaled \$851,619.22.

Mr. Rogers inquired as to whether the Code Department has a policy to cross reference Berks EIT records as to the number of rental properties paying their business privilege tax. Mrs. Madeira confirmed there is constant communication between the Code Department and Berks EIT for all new rental properties and businesses. The Code Department provides new businesses/rental property owners a registration form to submit directly to Berks EIT. Mr. Rogers requested an annual update between the two departments to ensure accuracy.

3. **READING HOSPITAL – WAYFINDING SIGNS:**

Mark McNash of Reading Hospital spoke of their plans to update their existing signage. A wayfinding study was completed and revealed many weaknesses with their existing signage. The goal is to reduce verbiage, focus on directing traffic to the proper garage entrance and stay within the guidelines of a variance granted in 2009.

Steven Bayshore of Cloud Gehshan Associates provided a presentation as to placement, lighting and material to be used as well as traffic flow into the campus:

- The intent is to educate the public prior to approaching the area to improve traffic flow through information on the hospital website. A tower beacon and logo are to be placed at their main approach to the campus at 5th Avenue. Also, more directional signage is required per current PennDOT regulations.
- Emergency entrance sign is to be scaled down with the addition of a beacon.

- Their goal is to highlight the 5th & 7th Avenue entrances and down play the 6th Avenue entrance.
- Directional signs are planned at edges of the campus with banner type signage. Vertical banners will replace the current pylon.
- A reflective material and illuminated “push through” lettering is to be used to create a soft illumination and avoid a commercial type lighting.
- The allotted square footage allowed through the 2009 variance is 765, the proposed sign package totals 739 square feet excluding directional type signs, which are excluded from permitting.
- Message load to be a maximum of four per sign.
- A skyline sign is currently in the planning stages for the new Healthplex building. This sign has not been figured into the square footage previously mentioned. Halo type lighting is planned for this sign.

Mr. Wert inquired as to illumination of banner type signs. Mr. Bayshore reports there will be no illumination of these signs, just larger signs.

Mr. Lincoln inquired as to the monument signs at access points being located in the right-of-way. Mr. Bayshore states only directional signage will be located in a right-of-way area and the new banner poles, the monuments will remain in the current location only angled slightly to face oncoming traffic. Mr. Lincoln suggested a maintenance agreement for the poles located within the right-of-way.

Chief Powell inquired as to timing change for traffic lights with the influx of traffic to this area. Mr. McNash felt that was a fair question that had not been considered and will research this. Chief Powell also inquired as to timing of installation in conjunction with Buttonwood Street bridge opening. Mr. McNash stated they would like to begin as soon as possible, however will await the Code Department’s approval of the applications.

Mrs. Livingood thanked the hospital for being mindful of light pollution, as a previous Zoning Hearing Board member she is aware of the issues this can cause. Mrs. Livingood also inquired as to improvements to the safety to the 5th Avenue entrance. Mr. Bayshore stated with the new height of the proposed monument signs, angling to oncoming traffic and directional signage these will all help to improve the safety to this entrance. Mr. Bayshore stated there is not much flexibility with sign size due to PennDOT regulations.

4. **ESTERLY CONCRETE WAIVER REQUEST:**

Dan Gring of D&B Elite reported that he met with the Planning Commission to request a waiver of land development for a proposed small addition to the rear of an existing building to create a break area and office space. The addition is planned over existing impervious surface, no additional storm water runoff, or increase to traffic or employees is anticipated. No real impact will be caused to the property for this proposed addition. The Planning Commission and Engineer have suggested approval to their waiver request.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert to approve waiver of land development for Esterly Concrete addition. **Motion carried 6-0.**

5. **LOFTS AT NARROW:**

Mr. Wert stated the 3rd submission of traffic, lighting, parking and landscaping plans have been approved by the Planning Commission and Engineer. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve land development plan for the Lofts at Narrow. **Motion carried 6-0.**

6. **FASHIONISTA 5K:**

Ms. Capone, mother of Delaney Brown, requested permission and waiving fees for the 4th annual Fashionista 5K. The route remains the same as previous years. The requested date is Sunday, April 23, 2017 beginning approximately 9:00 AM and ending approximately 10:00 AM. A map was provided with the planned route to begin on 7th Avenue down to Spruce Street to the trail and through the park system. Ms. Capone will work with any requests from the Police Department.

Chief Powell had no issue with the request. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Thompson to approve the Fashionista 5K request and waiving of the fees. **Motion carried 6-0.**

7. **MIKE WAGNER – TOMPKINS INSURANCE:**

Mrs. Rentschler reported Mr. Wagner researched and located a policy which would drop premiums by 5% with the same coverage and deductible, as opposed to the 20% increase that was anticipated. The carrier would be Selective and this would save \$32,000. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve insurance policy with Selective. **Motion carried 6-0.**

8. **APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the Council meeting minutes of December 20, 2016. **Motion carried 6-0.**

9. **ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **Ordinance 1069 – Water Rate Amendment**
- b. **Ordinance 1070 – Sewer Rate Amendment**

Mr. Garman stated that the ordinances will be adopted at the second Council meeting scheduled for January 24, 2017 at 7:00 PM.

10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Ragnar Race** – Mrs. Hoffman stated representatives were unable to attend either of our meetings, however she will attempt to clarify any questions or obtain answers to any specific questions. As in a previous race this marginally entered the borough and no issues were experienced in the past. Mrs. Hoffman will review previous minutes for more information.
- b. **RiverPlace Land** – Mrs. Hoffman stated she has not had the opportunity to review if any testing has been done on this parcel of land. Mr. Wert suggested that due to acquisition of real estate this item should be addressed during executive session.

11. **CONSULTANT'S REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Haws stated he had nothing further to report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the Solicitor's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- b. **Engineer / Code Enforcement Department:**
 - 1. **Parkview Road Bridge** - Mr. Unger met with an engineer hired by the state and obtained their inspection report. He also met with PennDOT last week and they are working through a few items as well as a scope of work. Once Mr. Unger receives comments from PennDOT, a design build document will be prepared for advertisement. The load ratings of the bridge have been maintained, however if no repairs are made, this rating will more than likely be

decreased, which could potentially result in bridge closure. Ms. Craze inquired as to phasing of repairs and Mr. Unger stated there are categories as to which items should be addressed. They are bidding as individual line items to determine where the costs are to be able to choose which items to address. Mr. Unger stated painting is a large ticket item due to the lead paint, however this can be addressed at a later date. Mr. Unger stated County Aid money is available from liquid fuels, however this will not cover the entire bridge project. Mr. Unger stated no action is required at this time. Chief Burkholder stated the fire department has not used this bridge in a number of years.

2. **Buttonwood Street Paving** – Mr. Unger stated this project has been advertised to receive bids on February 16, 2017 and will have information for Council to take action during the February Council meeting. This project is to be completed while the bridge remains closed.
3. **Pump Station Flow Monitor** – Mr. Unger stated they received three competitive quotes, however only one below the bidding amount, which was Stover Sensus Controls at \$19,699. The meter chosen is identical to the one installed at the Olive Street Pump Station. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Wert to accept the bid from Stover Sensus Controls in the amount of \$19,699. **Motion carried 6-0.**
4. **December Zoning / Code Enforcement Report and Receipt** – No questions.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept engineer's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

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

- a. **Berks Conservation District Memo Of Understanding (MOU)** – Mrs. Hoffman stated that the MOU requires notification of any earthwork being done within the Borough. Mr. Wert inquired as to a change in terms, Mr. Unger stated this is standard. It is the applicant/contractor's responsibility to obtain the permits, the Borough is not held responsible. **Moved** by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Craze to authorize the execution of the MOU. **Motion carried 6-0.**
- b. **Certification of Unpaid Tax Bills** – Mrs. Hoffman reported these are the usual reports the tax collector must report to the County. There are two types of reports, the second report is for unpaid interim taxes which pertain to an assessment change to the property to carry them to the end of the year. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mrs. Kulesa to approve certification of unpaid tax bills. **Motion carried 6-0.**

13. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Due to his absence, the mayor requested that Mr. Wert read his "School Choice Week Proclamation" declared for the week of January 22, 2017.

14. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell reported he had one minor issue for executive session.

Mr. Lincoln inquired as to difference in the 2016 statistics, particularly traffic citations issued versus collected. Chief Powell advised they are accounted for however the difference would be either no response, been dismissed or are appealing to the County. Therefore the number of tickets issued doesn't necessarily reflect the number of fines.

Ms. Shenk inquired as to progress on catching the robber of a boutique on Penn Avenue. Chief

Powell stated they are still working on this however they have a promising lead.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to accept Police Department's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

b. Public Works – Mr. Murray has nothing to add to his report.

Mrs. Kulesa inquired as to progress of the new concession stand. Mr. Murray stated they are currently working on electric, finishing the plumbing and moving onto insulation and drywall in the near future.

Mr. Wert inquired as to Mr. Murray's experience with Messner Tree Service. Mr. Murray said he is very pleased; they are efficient, consistent, clean up after themselves and reasonably priced. Mr. Wert also inquired as to the recent Police Department carbon monoxide issue. Mr. Murray reported a pipe had rusted through allowing gases to be pulled back into the building. The pipe has been replaced. Currently there are no CO2 detectors in the building however there are plans to install throughout the building in the near future.

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the Public Works' report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

c. Fire Department – Chief Burkholder had nothing to add to his report other than banquet invitations will be emailed. The banquet date is February 11, 2017.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the Fire Department's report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

d. West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation – Dean Rohrbach was not in attendance for this meeting. Mr. Wert reported the business improvement district discussions are moving ahead. DCED's PA Downtown plans to perform a no-cost study to include property owners in a question and answer session. If the response is favorable they will move ahead. Also discussions are underway to fill the vacancy of the Main Street Manager position.

Ms. Thompson commended Mr. Rohrbach on continually obtaining grants and noted the majority of the grant money is related to public art.

Mr. Garman thanked Ms. Shenk and the Love Team for their donation to the Christmas Decoration fund.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to accept the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

15. **COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:**

a. Recreation – Helen Moyer was not in attendance for this meeting. Mrs. Kulesa stated there are no action items. The committee is currently preparing for the April 8th Easter Egg Hunt. Volunteers are welcome to attend their workshops planned on March 25th and April 1st beginning at 9:00 AM. Also, letters have been mailed to summer employment candidates for the pool and playground.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to accept the Recreation report. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Kristin Kramer arrived 8:34 p.m.

- b. Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert stated a hearing will be held next Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at 7:00 PM regarding Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF) amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Wert also reported an additional hearing will be needed in the near future regarding a medical marijuana policy. Mr. Unger attended and provided information to the Planning Commission regarding the State Laws regarding two uses: 1) Dispensary and 2) Processing. A dispensary may not be located within 1,000 feet of a school or daycare. Bruce Heilman of Systems Design Engineering did a review and found not many locations where this use would be feasible. The Code Department has already received three inquiries regarding this use and he hopes to reopen the Zoning Ordinance within two months.

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the Planning Commission report. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. Economic Development Committee** – The meeting was cancelled.
- d. Environmental Advisory Council** – The meeting was cancelled.
- e. Traffic Committee and Infrastructure Committee** – Chief Powell discussed parking enforcement issues with Keith Mooney who believes wording is already included in the current ordinance, however will need clarification from the District Justice. Mr. Garman inquired as to the time frame for installation of Cobra head light fixtures on Penn Avenue. Mr. Murray reported they are ready to be installed, just awaiting Met-Ed. The locations will be on the South side of Penn Avenue due to pole placement.

Moved by Mrs. Kulesa and seconded by Ms. Thompson to accept the Traffic and Infrastructure report. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. Shade Tree Commission** – Mrs. Hoffman stated the minutes have not been completed. Also, the committee plans to take a course through a Penn State extension program called Tree Vitalize, the webinar is weekly and begins on January 26, 2017. Mr. Murray reported Messner Tree Service has removed trees. Ms. Kramer inquired as to branch removal and stated Sycamore Road has not been cleaned up for a month.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Kramer to accept Shade Tree Commission report. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- g. Finance Committee** – Mrs. Hoffman stated the minutes have not been completed. The ordinance establishing a finance committee will be voted on during the January 24, 2017 meeting. Ms. Craze stated she was the only one present to vote.

Moved by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson to accept the Finance Committee report. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- h. Safety Committee** – Mr. Murray reported cold weather injury issues were discussed during this

meeting to prevent hypothermia type injuries. Ms. Craze inquired as to the necessity of CPR certification for every member, she suggested possibly just the crew leader and department head have certification. Mr. Garman and Chief Burkholder explained the strenuous compression activity intervals which cannot be interrupted and the importance of having as many people certified as possible to be able to take turns.

Mr. Garman appointed Mr. Murray as Safety Committee Chairman.

Moved by Ms. Kramer and seconded by Ms. Craze to accept the Safety Committee report.
Motion carried 7-0.

16. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

- a. **Revenues with Comparison to Budget – 12 months ending 12/31/2016** - Mr. Lincoln thanked department heads and management for coming in over budget on revenues and under budget on expenses for 2016. Mr. Wert reiterated with his observance during the budget meetings the department heads are being cautious with the money and doing a good job. Ms. Craze questioned the difference on page 28 for landfill fees. Mrs. Rentschler explained 13 months were paid in 2016.

Moved by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze to approve the revenues with comparison to budget report for the 12 months ending 12/31/2016.

- b. **Payment Approval Report – 12/21/2016 to 1/13/2017 & 1/14/17 to 1/17/17** –Ms. Craze inquired as to inlet repair on Buttonwood Street. Mr. Murray reported the catch basin tops were repaired for the upcoming paving project.

Moved by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson to accept the payment report for 12/21/2016 to 1/13/2017 and 1/14/17 to 1/17/17. **Motion carried 7-0.**

17. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to executive session at 9:11 p.m. When Council reconvened at 9:20 p.m., Mr. Garman stated they discussed two personnel issues. Before opening the floor to the second Public Comment he opened the floor to Ms. Kramer.

Ms. Kramer announced she recently accepted a career opportunity with United Way of Berks County. As a result she must resign her council position due to a United Way policy prohibiting serving as a public official. She has enjoyed working with everyone this past year and handed her resignation letter to Mr. Garman.

Mr. Lincoln inquired as to time frame on accepting her resignation. Mrs. Hoffman stated Council has 45 days to accept, however the vacancy must be filled within 30 days. Therefore Ms. Kramer's resignation will be accepted during the January 24, 2017 Council meeting. An advertisement will be placed in the Reading Eagle on Wednesday, January 25, 2017 and information available on our website. Letters of interest are to be submitted by February 17, 2017 at 1:00 PM to allow acceptance during February 21, 2017 Council meeting.

18. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers spoke about the 9 acres of land along the river and wondered if it would be possible to utilize this land for recreation to satisfy the state. Mr. Wert informed him that it is being discussed but is an executive session topic.

19. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Moved by Ms. Kramer and seconded by Ms. Craze to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager