

BOROUGH OF WEST READING – BOROUGH COUNCIL

February 21, 2017 – 7:00 p.m.

West Reading Borough Council held its regular monthly meeting at Borough Hall on Tuesday, February 21, 2017 with the following persons present: Council President Carl G. Garman; Council Vice-President Nathalie Kulesa; Council Members Grace M. Craze; Suzanne Thompson; Nicholas F. Imbesi; Christopher C. Lincoln; Philip C. Wert; Borough Manager Cathy L. Hoffman; Police Chief Stephen D. Powell; Mayor Valentin Rodriguez, Jr. Fire Chief Mark Burkholder; Public Works Crew Leader Kerry Grassley; Solicitor Charles Haws ; Borough Treasurer Jeanette Rentschler; Elm Street Manager Dean Rohrbach; Recreation Director Helen Moyer and Assistant to the Manager Cynthia J. Madeira. Engineer Tom Unger was unable to attend.

VISITORS:	James T. Rogers	Resident
	Karen Livingood	Resident
	Doug Zeeger	Resident
	Christina Shenk	Business Owner
	Elizabeth & Ammon Heckler	Residents
	Philip & Bonnie Cambria	Residents
	Oswald Herbert	Resident
	Hunter Beane	Resident
	B. Scott Fiegel	Resident
	Hartono Tjoe	Resident
	Martha & Larry Weidner	Residents
	Amber Rambo	Resident
	Andy Moletress	Resident
	Robin Horman	Resident
	Bryce Matthews	Resident
	Kevin Flannery	Equus Capital Partners
	George Haines	Equus Capital Partners
	Matt Nanci	Reading Eagle
	Therron Deets	Comcast
	Dennis Oberholtzer	Comcast

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.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Weidner expressed concern regarding a sewage spill at a neighboring rental property that had gone unreported for a number of days and inquired as to the Borough's regulations. Mrs. Hoffman stated the Public Works Department contacted the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to obtain their current regulations to remove the unsanitary condition. The Public Works Department as well as the Borough Manager were in direct contact with the owner of the property to outline the required steps and followed up with a letter regarding the same. Mrs. Hoffman also stated the owner of the property has been in contact with DEP and is being cooperative in a timely manner to remediate the unsanitary condition. Mrs. Hoffman stated the Borough would continue to monitor the cleanup process for this property.

Ms. Rambo expressed dissatisfaction with the number of rental properties in the Borough and the need to educate the tenants as well as the ability of the Code Department to address landlord complaints.

Mr. Matthews congratulated Elm Street for the five-year pursuit of a DCED grant to replace sidewalk and curbing along Sixth Avenue in the heart of the Borough.

Mr. Moletress thanked Council for their support in the lengthy process of Elm Street endured in obtaining a grant for sidewalk and curbing improvements. As a member of the WRCRF and general contractor for the Elm Street PARR projects Mr. Moletress expressed the difficulty in rehabilitating homes to be maintenance free, owner occupied and earn a profit.

Fire Chief Mark Burkholder arrived at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Fiegel expressed concern regarding recent documented incidents where an out of state trucking company continues to drive over the deteriorating Parkview Road Bridge with loads exceeding the posted weight limit. One incident in particular was only cited for driving through the Borough and would like to see these incidents cited for excess weight. Mr. Fiegel is concerned with these incidents causing additional bridge repair expenses being passed onto the taxpayers. Chief Powell will review the report, and the Mayor will inquire with the State Police as to enforcement of the weight limit to impose the steeper fines.

3. **VANITY FAIR PRESENTATION:**

Kevin Flannery and George Haines of Equus Capital Partners shared their plans to adapt and reuse the historic buildings as a mixed-use environment for the Vanity Fair complex. UGI Energy Services will be their long-term anchor business for this location. They are creating an environment to attract a workforce to live, work and play in West Reading's unique, desirable location in close proximity to the attractions along Penn Avenue. The Designers' Place building will be home to Vanity Fair on the 1st floor with Vanity Fair's corporate offices on the 2nd floor a large local business is interested in the remaining floors of this building. Renovations to this building will be their first priority and anticipate completion by the end of 2017. The outer buildings on the Wyomissing portion of the campus will remain with the exception of one to create additional parking. They plan to occupy these buildings with offices, retail and restaurant uses to create a VF Village. Demolition of the Red and partial demolition of the Blue building is planned to annex parking and construct the UGI structure. The top floor of this structure will be UGI's central park with landscaping, trees, etc. to create a gathering place for their employees. Plans are also underway to develop a Wawa at the corner of Park Road and Penn Avenue.

Ms. Craze inquired as to possible Reading Avenue closures for the project. Mr. Haines will have further information as to construction plans in the future but there will be no closure of Reading Avenue.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion to approve Council minutes of January 17, 2017 regular meeting and the January 24, 2017 second meeting. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

5. **ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:**

Motion to adopt Ordinance 1065 Finance Committee. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a. **Ragnar Race** – Mr. Garman expressed concern regarding the event taking place on a Friday evening and added pressure on the Police Department. Chief Powell stated they must follow pedestrian traffic laws and no assistance has been requested more than likely due to the large time frame between the runners. Chief Powell will contact the director to inquire further. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln to approve the Ragnar Race. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Joint Comprehensive Plan Consulting Agreement** – This was discussed at the January 24, 2017 meeting. Motion to execute the agreement. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

7. **CONSULTANTS REPORTS:**

- a. **Solicitor's Report** – Mr. Haws reported that all items for discussion were covered elsewhere on the agenda. Motion to approve the Solicitor's report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**
- b. **Engineer's Report** – Mr. Unger was unable to attend the meeting due to business out of town.
1. **Parkview Road Bridge Permit Application** - Mrs. Hoffman reported that Systems Design Engineering would be applying on the Borough's behalf to DEP as part of the Parkview Road Bridge project. DEP invites Council to review the application and comment on it as it pertains to the Borough's zoning ordinance.
 2. **Buttonwood Street Paving** – Bids were opened on February 15, 2017 with four companies bidding for the project. The Borough budgeted \$235,000 for the project and the low bid of \$128,866 was received from New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc.

Motion to accept the bids received. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to accept New Enterprise Stone & Lime Co., Inc. not to exceed \$128,866. **Moved** by Ms. Craze and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Due to possible Buttonwood Street Bridge reopening earlier than anticipated this paving project will be begin as soon as possible. The Mayor thanked Council for moving quickly on this project to be completed prior to the anticipated Vanity Fair renovations.

Motion to approve the Engineer's Report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Due to the budgeted savings for this project the Mayor requested Council to consider item number 3 of the Engineer's report regarding preparation of Buttonwood Street existing condition plan to evaluate existing utilities and infrastructure conditions to determine what construction needs are for this area. The proposed cost for this service is \$3450. Council requested a list of items this plan would cover prior to granting approval.

Due to storm water seeping through a crevice of this roadway Mr. Grassley requested authorization to retain the services of Captain Clog to perform a video camera line inspection of storm water and sewer lines prior to paving. Authorization was granted.

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

- a. **Beer Garden Request** – The Barley Mow at 719 Penn Avenue has requested permission to install a 46' x 29' tent for use as a beer garden on Penn Avenue for the Art on the Avenue event planned on June 17, 2017 and the Fall Festival planned on September 16, 2017.

Motion to grant permission for the beer garden to Barley Mow on June 17, 2017 and September 16, 2017. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Proposed Comcast Phone System** – A budget of \$20,000 is in place to purchase a new phone system this year. Comcast has proposed a phone system, including installation of conduit with Internet wiring from Playground Drive to the pool estimated at \$7000, which will allow upgrades to the existing camera system and provide Internet service to this area. The Comcast system for Borough Hall, Fire Company, Garage, Pool and Bicentennial House will include all costs associated with the installation of wiring to the pool, maintaining the phone system, support, repair, long distance, software upgrades and automated attendant for a three-year contract of \$1750.85 per month. The Borough is currently expending \$775 per month for phone lines and long distance only being operated on an outdated Verizon system.

Mr. Wert inquired as to system operation during power outages. A Comcast representative in attendance stated the system would automatically reroute to an answering service or individual employee cell phones. Mr. Wert also inquired as to the time frame for pool connection. Mr. Deets stated three to four weeks to install upon signing of contract. Mrs. Hoffman also noted that Comcast offers training for their phone system.

Motion to enter into a three-year contract with Comcast. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

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

9. **MAYOR'S REPORT:**

The Mayor stated he attended a ribbon cutting ceremony in January for Fine Linez Barbershop located at 704 Penn Avenue that was sponsored by the Love Team. He also performed two marriage ceremonies.

A letter to PennDOT regarding traffic safety funding was drafted by Chief Powell and mailed; there has been no response to date.

Motion to approve the Mayor's report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

10. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

- a. **Police Department** – Chief Powell stated he had one to two items for executive session.

Mr. Garman requested a one-month trial for the Parking Enforcement Officer to modify his schedule to include hours on Thursday and Friday evenings to determine if there is a need for regular evening coverage. The trial will take place prior to commencement of the street sweeping schedule.

Ms. Craze reported Third & Spruce Café no longer allows residents to park on their parking lot and requested the possible addition of permit parking to this area. Mr. Lincoln stated he would like to see Third & Spruce employees parking on this lot to ease the street parking congestion. Mr. Wert will make a request to the owner of this business.

Mr. Garman commended the Police Department for the recent snow emergency actions.

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

- b. **Public Works** – Discussions took place regarding the sale of either the older but more useful 2008 SUV or the 2013 car for the use of the Public Works Director. A decision was made to inspect the SUV to make a determination at the next Council meeting.

Motion to approve the Public Works report. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- c. **Fire Department** – Chief Burkholder had nothing to add to his report and there were no questions.

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

- d. **West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation** – Mr. Rohrbach stated there are updates to his report. Funds received in 2016 now total \$412,512 with the \$246,512 DCED grant for South Sixth Avenue sidewalk and curbing project. Mr. Rohrbach stated the bid package is almost complete and the engineer estimates \$6000-\$8000 to complete the bid package. The grant allows \$42,000 for engineering, \$7000 for engineering administration and \$12,000 contingency.

Motion to authorize the engineer to complete the bid package not to exceed \$8000. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Mr. Rohrbach is hopeful this project could be completed this year and requested authorization to the Council President and Borough Manager to sign the DCED contract, ESA #201610148845 upon arrival in order to expedite the process.

Motion to allow Council President and Borough Manager to sign the contract upon arrival. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

The Mayor recognized Reading Hospital for their \$25,000 contribution towards eight ADA ramps on South Sixth Avenue as part of this project.

Mr. Garman inquired as to progress on filling the Main Street Manager position. Mr. Wert stated three applications have been received to date.

Motion to approve the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation report. **Moved** by Mr. Wert and seconded by Mr. Imbesi. **Motion carried 7-0.**

11. **COMMITTEE / COMMISSION REPORTS:**

- a. **Recreation Commission** – Mrs. Moyer stated that the Recreation Commission in conjunction with Sweet Surprises, is hosting a fudge fundraiser through April. Gift certificates can be purchased at Borough Hall or at any Recreation event. A second fundraiser, a Chili Cook Off is planned in the fall.

Mr. Garman reminded everyone of the need for volunteers on March 25th to stuff over 4000 Easter eggs.

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

- b. **Planning Commission** – Mr. Wert reported the upcoming medical marijuana zoning changes and other possible changes to the zoning district mapping.

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

- c. **Economic Development Committee** – Mr. Wert reported there are a number of properties currently on their watch list.

Motion to approve the Economic Development Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- d. **Environmental Advisory Committee** – The meeting was cancelled.

- e. **Traffic Committee & Infrastructure Committee** – Mr. Garman inquired as to the light fixture installation at the Sixth and Penn Avenue intersection. Mr. Grassley stated a fixture will be placed on the Met-Ed pole located on the North side pole due the deteriorated pole owned by an alternate utility company on the South side of this intersection. Should this lighting be insufficient an additional fixture may be added to the South side once the pole is replaced. Mr. Garman urged installation in a timely manner due to the number of pedestrian accidents at this currently dark busy intersection.

Motion to approve the Traffic Committee and Infrastructure Committee report. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- f. **Shade Tree Commission** – Mrs. Hoffman reported Ronald Schweitzer has been appointed as the chairman of this commission and the possibility of moving these meetings to an evening to allow better attendance.

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

- g. **Finance Committee** – Mrs. Rentschler reported the auditors visit went well as evidenced by their reduced number of days present to complete the audit. A request will be made to renegotiate the contract to reduce the cost and potentially obtain additional quotes for services. Mrs. Hoffman suggested moving the Finance Committee meetings to an evening to allow better attendance.

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

- h. **Safety Committee** – The meeting was cancelled.

12. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

- a. **Revenues with Comparison to Budget (1 month ending 1/31/2017)** – Mr. Wert inquired as to page 7 under inspection fees; there is nothing budgeted for state fees – additional costs. Mrs. Rentschler will inquire with the Code Department.

Motion to approve the Revenues with Comparison to Budget. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

- b. **Payment Approval Report (1/18/2017 to 2/17/2017 & 2/18/2017 to 2/21/2017)** – Motion to approve Payment Approval Report. **Moved** by Mr. Lincoln and seconded by Mr. Wert. **Motion carried 7-0.**

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Council recessed to executive session at 9:40 p.m. When Council reconvened at 10:22 p.m. Mr. Garman stated they discussed personnel and land acquisition items.

Motion to award Phase I site assessment for land acquisition to the low bidder. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Lincoln. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Motion to grant permission to Altrusa International Foundation of Reading Berks to place a Pagoda type structure in front of Kids Cuts for a free library pending Code Department regulations. **Moved** by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Ms. Thompson. **Motion carried 7-0.**

14. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mr. Rogers requested an explanation of Phase I Site Assessment for land acquisition. Mr. Haws explained this is an environmental assessment prior to potential purchase. Mr. Rogers inquired as to previous Borough records of researching this land. Mrs. Hoffman stated nothing was found.

15. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn meeting at 10:30 p.m. **Moved** by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Ms. Craze. **Motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Assistant to the Manager