

BOROUGH OF CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, March 2, 2016

PUBLIC MEETING

PRESENT: James Griffin, Council President
Karen Tutino, Council Vice-President
Robert Stokley, Senior Council Member
Anita Barton, Council Member
Tina Sokolowski, Council Member
Colleen Leonard, Council Member
Jane Flanagan, Council Member
Robert Frost, Mayor

ALSO PRESENT: Richard J. Manfredi, Borough Manager
Michael J. Savona, Borough Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Meeting of the Conshohocken Borough Council duly advertised, was held at Conshohocken Borough Hall, 400 Fayette Street, Conshohocken, Pa. Mr. James Griffin, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Council President announcements.

PRESENTATIONS

a.) Mr. Tip O'Neill: Conshohocken Rowing Center Report to Council

Mr. Tip O'Neill introduced himself as the Treasurer of the Conshohocken Rowing Center and shared that the center is now in its second year of activity and it is the only community rowing center in the region. He also provided the history of how it came to be as a result of a public-private partnership between the Borough, the Haverford School, and Malvern Preparatory School. Mr. O'Neill briefed Council on the management structure of the center and introduced Mr. Craig Hoffman, Executive Director of the center, Mr. John Stephanik, Associate Director, and Ms. Stephanie Cecco, Director of Recreation Services and Parks, who all help with daily operations. Mr. O'Neill concluded his report by sharing that the center will begin holding summer camps on April 8th and that there would also be a competitive Conshohocken Rowing Center junior team this year.

Mr. Stokley, Ms. Sokolowski, and Ms. Tutino inquired about the programs offered and who can participate. Ms. Kerri Hanlon of Yoga Home asked about the possibility of creating a relationship with the center and if they have plans to offer adaptive rowing; Mr. O'Neill replied that they do not yet have all of the equipment to offer such programming and Mr. Stephanik added that they are taking steps to do so. Ms. Rosemary Northcutt asked if information about the center could be made more accessible and Mr. Manfredi explained several communications initiatives underway that the Borough will

use to reach residents on this subject and others. Mr. Griffin then introduced the next presentation.

b.) Mr. Kent Baird: CVDA Presentation on Riverfront Plan

Mr. Kent Baird of Carter Van Dyke Associates introduced himself as well as Mr. Carter Van Dyke himself who was present. He shared that the Riverfront Plan is a partnership project between Conshohocken and Whitemarsh and he highlighted the goals of the project which are to improve access to the riverfront, to connect our trails, make the riverfront a destination, meet recreation and open space needs, provide for economic development, and to incorporate sustainable development. He detailed the ways in which he would reach those goals, shared plans and images of the proposed improvements, and concluded that the next steps for the project are to create an action plan and develop the final draft of the plan.

Ms. Barton and Mr. Savona offered feedback on some of the ideas shared during Mr. Baird's presentation. Ms. Flanagan inquired about the investment figures for the project and about who would maintain the new developments. Finally, Mr. Manfredi asked Mr. Baird to explain to Council if there was anything in particular that he was hoping to learn from them as he proceeds. Mr. Baird replied that he would need their assistance as he finds ways to fund the plan and that he would appear before Council again as well for additional feedback. Mr. Griffin called for comment and Mr. Dennis Beaver shared that all of the presentations this evening relate to the riverfront and he reiterated that, if people are going to be in that area, safety needs to remain a priority. There was no further comment and so Mr. Griffin called for the next presenter.

c.) Mr. Robert Gundlach, Fox Rothschild, LLP: Keystone Property Group SORA West Project Update.

Mr. Robert Gundlach of Fox Rothschild, LLP introduced himself and his colleague, Ms. Jennifer Wunder, as well as Mr. Michael Brookshier and Mr. Richard Gottlieb of Keystone Property Group, and Mr. Pete Spiszak of Traffic Planning and Design who were present. Mr. Gundlach highlighted that, after meetings with Borough staff, the plans had been scaled back so that the height of the office buildings have been reduced from 250 feet to between 150 and 170 feet, 220 proposed hotel rooms are now reduced to 171 rooms and the parking garage that was once over ten levels is now an eight level garage with two below grade levels. They have also added additional green areas, re-worked the hotel drop-off location, and continue to hold discussions with Washie's about their role in this project. Mr. Gundlach also provided figures for the number of employment opportunities that would be generated by the site and projected that the site could generate an annual net income of \$773,168 for the Borough and \$1,225,133 for the school district. Mr. Gundlach concluded his presentation by discussing the status of the traffic impact study and sharing an approval timeline for the remainder of the project.

Mr. Savona commented that aspects of the land development plan layout are subject to change and that Council needs to determine whether they would be willing to consider adoption of the proposed SP-4 zoning. Both Ms. Barton and Ms. Sokolowski expressed their reasons for hesitating to permit the SP-4 district and Mr. Savona further explained that the SP-4 district would create a new mixed-use area with certain pre-conditions that would limit the number of areas that could qualify for this new use. Mr. Manfredi asked Mr. Andrew Carlin, President of Washie's who was in the audience that evening, if what Keystone had presented thus far about discussions between the two was consistent with Washie's view on the matter and Mr. Carlin confirmed that that Keystone's description

was accurate. Mr. Savona then asked Council if they would consent to permitting the Montgomery County and Borough Planning Commissions to begin reviews of the proposed ordinance as the next step for the project and they gave their consent. Before closing the discussion on the SORA West project, Ms. Leonard explained that traffic is still one of Council's major concerns and asked for confirmation that they would be given additional opportunities to discuss it and other outstanding concerns; Mr. Gundlach explained that the traffic study is under review by PennDOT and the Borough and that it would be addressed with Council further at a later date. Mr. Griffin then introduced Council Business.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a.) Comfort Station at Equus.

Mr. Bob Dwyer of Equus Properties explained that he had secured final land development approval to construct an office complex at 400 West Elm Street that included a comfort station in close proximity to the Grande and that he was present to request approval to either relocate the comfort station or to provide a fee in lieu of it. Ms. Tutino shared that she had met with Mr. Dwyer and Borough staff to review alternate sites for the station and that they were unable to find one that would meet the requirements of the Grande residents so she wished to determine if Council would consent to opt for the fee and, following discussion, Council consented for the fee.

Mr. Dwyer then discussed ways to alter trails and update a bridge that currently exists near the office complex to improve access to the trail system and requested to remove a ramp and step structure that leads down to the trail because it is a hazard. Mr. Savona commented that Mr. Dwyer's proposals could require a plan amendment and, to avoid that process, Mr. Dwyer agreed that the only changes he would make would be to remove the comfort station and make a field change to the bridge.

Mr. Griffin called for public comment and Mr. Dennis Beaver asked if there were any way to move the station closer to the train station; Mr. Stokley replied that it could not be done. Mr. Joe Forino shared that he had spoken with Ms. Tutino about the small parking lot next to the development because it is a permitted lot but there are too many permits given out and it has a fence in need of repair so he requested that developer could extend that parking. Mr. Dwyer replied that he had already provided spaces for residents to be used all hours on the property and Mr. Manfredi added that he and Ms. Tutino were aware of the issue that Mr. Forino shared and that the Borough would be putting in concrete curb stops and would repair the fence.

b.) Determination on next steps with Leeland Mansion.

Mr. Manfredi shared that Ms. Barton had requested that this item be tabled and Council consented to table the matter.

MANAGER MATTERS

Mr. Manfredi introduced Mr. Chris Ciavarelli and his father, Mr. William Ciavarelli, to discuss the placement of the Lenape Indian wood carving donation that they would be presenting to the Borough. Mr. Stokley suggested the lower lobby in Borough Hall as well as installing a plaque recognizing the donation and including educational information about it. There was no final

determination on the location but Council thanked the Ciavarelli's and Mr. Manfredi agreed to work to get the plaques created.

Next, Mr. Manfredi introduced Ms. Dana Reeves and Ms. Patti Guttenplan of Bergmann Associates to share the proposed design of the islands to be installed on Hector Street. After the presentation, Mr. Stokley asked if the residents were contacted about the islands and Ms. Sokolowski replied that a letter would be sent shortly; Mr. Manfredi added that letters were also mailed to Ward 3 residents last year in advance of the work that was done. Mr. Stokley also inquired who would maintain the new islands and Mr. Manfredi replied that the Borough would engage someone. Mr. Griffin called for public comment and Mr. John Costello asked if the hardscape would be drivable for a fire truck and Ms. Guttenplan answered that it would be. Mr. Manfredi inquired if Council was still in agreement with Mr. Griffin's preference that his blocks of Hector Street receive no islands and all were.

Mr. Manfredi then asked Mr. Paul Hughes, Borough Engineer, to present options for the A-Field wall replacement project. Council was asked if they would like the new wall materials to be precast concrete panel or brick block. After some discussion, Council determined that the pre-cast option would be utilized.

Mr. Manfredi concluded his matters by sharing updates on the next meeting's consent agenda, the status of several Borough projects, plans for the Environmental Advisory Council appointments, the Borough Hall open house, the upcoming Fun Fest event and various other matters. Finally, he discussed possible changes to be made to the parking ordinance and also asked if Council was inclined to remove the ten parking meters that are on 4th Avenue as part of the ordinance revisions; after discussion, Council determined that they should keep the meters until there is further study.

LEGAL MATTERS

There were no legal matters to discuss.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR MATTERS

Mayor Frost commented that March 12th would be the St. Patrick's Day Parade and that Council had walked as a group in the past and gave away candy that Mr. Buek supplied. He asked if Mr. Buek had ordered the candy for this year's event and Mr. Buek replied that he had.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment shared.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard J. Manfredi,
Borough Secretary