

BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG COUNCIL MEETING
Planning Session
April 7, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Moore called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

President Moore announced that an executive session was held at approximately 6:00 PM to discuss a personnel issue.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin and President Moore. Also present were Mayor John Thompson, Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager, and Isobel Storch from the Law Offices of Patricia McGrail, L.L.C. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the Pledge of Allegiance a moment of silence was observed for the victims of violent crime and miners in West Virginia.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Maloney – Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services – Mr. Maloney reported that the EMS crews responded well to the February snow event and was mentioned in a national EMS news magazine. For the month of March, there were 297 emergency calls with an average response time of six minutes eighteen seconds. The average response time for non emergency calls was eight minutes twenty four seconds. For the first quarter of the year, emergency response times were six minutes fifty five seconds. Mr. Maloney spoke highly of the work of the Wilkinsburg Department of Public Works. Mr. Maloney advised Council of the annual subscription drive currently being conducted. President Moore expressed gratitude for the response of Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services during winter snow emergency.

Phyllis Wetherby – 807 Penn Ave. near Center St. – Expressed her thanks to DPW for clearing snow promptly. Ms. Wetherby spoke as a member of the Census Complete Count Committee and the status of its efforts.

Ms. Trice informed Council about the Census Blitz event on Saturday, April 10, 2010 at the Borough Building beginning at 11:00 AM. Benita Johnson, US Census Bureau,

spoke about the Census Blitz and Wilkesburg participation rate. Wilkesburg's participation rate has been below city averages by about fifty percent. This effort is being sponsored as one last outreach effort to encourage residents to complete their census questionnaires. Ms. Johnson advised that volunteers are needed to stand at main arteries and at mailboxes to distribute flyers to encourage people to mail their census questionnaires. Tee shirts and hats will be given to volunteers.

Kate Luxemburg 432 Rebecca Ave. – Expressed concern about signs in yards advertising “tax sale delayed” and “foreclosure” and requested that DPW pull those signs. These signs are located mostly on Borough properties. Mr. Luxemburg inquired about a report in the Tribune Review regarding Wilkesburg Police Department not having access to federal and state databases. Mayor Thompson advised that he will address this in his report to Council. Ms. Luxemburg reported that one house at Peebles Square has been sold. She further commented about an encounter with a dog leaping off a porch at her and questioned whether the animals at large ordinance would address this issue. Ms. Evans suggested posting ordinances that deal with common issues on the website. Mr. Cohn suggested selecting one ordinance a month to highlight in the Wilkesburg Sun.

Richard Bradford – 502 Holmes St. – Commented on PSSA testing this week and asked Council members to encourage youth in their neighborhoods to study. Mr. Bradford further commented on the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra concert and record turn-out.

Gail Mitchell Hall – Weed & Seed Site Coordinator – Mr. Mitchell-Hall advised that the Weed & Seed Initiative is working on a number of projects. She cited Wilkesburg Redd Up Project being performed in collaboration with KEYS Americorps. The efforts will focus on three (3) blocks in each ward. Ms. Hall commented on previously untapped resources in the Borough who are approaching her regarding potential partnerships. The University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work will be providing technical and administrative support to develop a community resource guide.

REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Thompson – reported:

- Commented on the inaccuracies in a recent article in a local newspaper. He advised that the Police Department did lose direct access to JNET but the information can be obtained through the County. An investigation is being conducted.
- He expressed great pleasure with the attendance for the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra concert. Proceeds benefit the school music program. Another concert is planned for November.
- The last class for the Citizens Police Academy is May 4, 2010.
- The Week of Hope work group will be in Wilkesburg again this year and are seeking to identify projects to help seniors during the month of July.
- Wilkesburg Community Development Corporation received a \$10,000 matching grant from PNC to retain a real estate consultant to work on analyzing and marketing properties in the business district.

Report from Council President- Adult Library Report:

- Wise Walk kick-off will be Tuesday April 11, 2010 at 11:00 AM. Sign up is in the Main Branch of the Library, Adult Section, 412 244-4377.
- Crochet classes continue and are taught by Frankie Turner on Saturdays at 11:00 AM. A size 1 crochet hook is required and a scan of 4 ply cotton yarn.
- Donations are being accepted for the used book sale and flea market to be held June 4 through 12 with proceeds to benefit F.O.L.L.O.W.
- Commented that Penn Ave is looking better and wished everyone a safe spring.
- Commented that there are still a number of downed trees and tire dumping.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Capital Planning Committee- Ms. Macklin reported:

- The Committee met on March 24, 2010 with Ms. Ervin, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Marcinko and Mr. Gilliland. The meeting focused on brainstorming to identify open issues relating to infrastructure.
- The Committee's focus will be on larger, community-wide capital projects and identifying funding sources for public purposes relating to parks, equipment replacement and other infrastructure improvements.
- Meetings will be held every 4th Wednesday of the month at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers.
- For the next meeting on April 28, the Committee will be reviewing the five-year capital plans submitted by the departments.

Finance Committee- Mr. Cohn reported

- The Committee met on March 16, 2010 and the purpose of the meeting was to establish goals for the year and prioritizing and implementing the recommendations from the Five-Year Plan and Financial Management Study.
- The Committee is looking at updating the format of the monthly Financial Reports at the recommendation of Councilwoman Macklin.
- Mr. Cohn requested that the agenda and minutes for all Committee meetings be posted on the website.
- The Joint Tax Committee continues to meet and refine the tax incentive programs. The Committee is exploring a tiered fee structure for different types of properties. They are also looking at using the Sheriff's Sale process as another tool to return properties to productivity. The Committee will soon be exploring innovative ways to advertise and market vacant properties.
- The next meeting will be held on April 26, 2010 at 5:30 PM.

Ms. Macklin questioned how to expedite the sale of property owned by the Borough and School District. She would like to work on this either with Council and/or the Joint Committee.

Personnel Committee –Ms. Trice reported:

- The Committee met on March 10, 2010.
- Policies and procedures were distributed and the Committee will work on updating those.
- The Committee discussed customer service issues, progressive discipline policy and communications with residents and other Borough employees.
- Ms. Trice announced that the next meeting will be on April 14, 2010 at 6:00 PM and these meetings are not open to the public.

Public Safety Committee –Mr. Lefebvre reported:

- The Committee meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month in Council Chambers at 5:30 PM.
- The next meeting will be April 21, 2010.

REPORT FROM BOROUGH MANAGER

Ms. Marcinko reported Council was provided copies of information from Michael Foreman, Governor's Center for Local Government Services, regarding the CONNECT project which is a consortium of thirty five municipalities that border City of Pittsburgh to work on various regional issues. CONNECT has applied to DCED for shared services funding for staff positions. The Borough has been requested to serve as the applicant for this funding on behalf of CONNECT due to the fact that the Borough is an EIP community and that program will be the source of the funding. Mr. Cohn questioned the Borough's liability in the administration of the grant and costs of doing so. Ms. Evans suggested that this relationship between the Borough and CONNECT should be addressed in a separate agreement between the parties which will be reviewed by the Solicitor. Ms. Macklin expressed concern that this award of funding not count against Wilkesburg if receipt of funds is considered for future projects. Ms. Evans clarified work of CONNECT as a more proactive approach to shared services. Mr. Lewis questioned whether CONNECT would cover the Borough's administrative costs, specifically solicitor fees and staff time. Ms. Marcinko responded she is unsure if administrative fees would be allocated out of the \$30,000. Ms. Macklin questioned the efforts of TCVCOG and CONNECT and interrelationship and whether meetings are open to the public and public officials. It was the consensus of Council to move forward with the approving resolution to be on the April 21 agenda with all concerns being addressed prior to that time.

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution 10-039

The Wilkesburg Borough Council hereby authorizes the award of the Mold Remediation Project to ABMECH, Inc. in the amount of \$12,241.70.

Moved: Ms. Ervin

Second: Ms. Macklin

Yes: Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

Motion carried

Ms. Marcinko informed Council that she received a recommendation from the Borough Engineer that the Residential Permit Parking restriction in the 1100 block of South Ave can be removed.

It was the consensus of Council to prepare the necessary legislation to remove the residential parking restriction in the 1100 block of South Ave.

Mr. Lewis questioned why there is not a traffic signal at the intersection of Wood St. and Hill Ave. and when will the work be done. This question has remained unanswered for almost a year.

Ms. Marcinko answered that Council did not authorize to proceed to replace the traffic signal until August. Subsequent to that, parts had to be found and placed on order. The directive was given to perform the wiring the last week in January. There have been delays in performing the work due to the break-down of the bucket truck and receipt of parts.

Mayor Thompson questioned if there in fact had been a study to replace the traffic light. Ms. Marcinko advised that the Borough Engineer had recommended its removal and Council took action in August 2009 to replace the traffic signal.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

10-040 CITF Concurring Resolution authorizing the application to Allegheny County for funding in the amount of \$101,000 for the paving of Rebecca Ave.

Moved: Mr. Cohn

Second: Ms. Trice

Mr. Cohn opened discussion and questioned the funding source for this project. Ms. Marcinko responded that CITF stands for Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund.

Yes: Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

Motion carried

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Ms. Trice read a proposed resolution regarding participation in the "Everyone Counts Day", census blitz, on Saturday, April 10, 2010.

Moved: Ms. Macklin

Second: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Yes: Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, President Moore

Motion carried

Sponsor a banner approximately 8 x 5 in dimensions across Penn Ave. to advertise Earth Day Clean-UP.

Moved: Ms. Macklin
Johnson

Second: Ms. McCarthy-

Yes: Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, President Moore

Motion carried

Approving proposed settlement agreement and release with James Carraway in the amount of \$175,000.00.

Moved: Mr. Cohn

Second: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Yes: Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, President Moore

No: Mr. Lewis, Ms. Macklin

Motion carried 7:2

Ms. Evans reported the Wilkinsburg Municipal Authority and the Wilkinsburg Community and Industrial Development Authority announced and advertised upcoming meetings to be held in the Borough Manager's Conference Room for May 11, 2010, July 13, 2010, September 14, 2010, and November 9, 2010. These meetings will be held at 6:00 PM.

Ms. Evans reported attending a meeting at the end of March regarding Peebles Square and vacant lots around the development. Plantings plans were discussed and funding sources for the plantings.

A Business District Safety Meeting was held and several arrests were made with actors attacking people at ATM machines in daylight and spraying them with mace. Residents

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are cautioned to be careful as this is not only occurring in Wilkinsburg but other areas as well.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson announced that the residents of the Whitney Park area are sponsoring a clean-up at Whitney Park on April 24, 2010. They are requesting that the basketball/volleyball court be removed as well as the fencing. The metal fencing poses a safety hazard. Council agreed that if these issues posed a safety hazard, then they should be addressed quickly.

The Parks and Recreation Board will meet the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Lewis second by Ms. McCarthy Johnson the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:10 PM.

Eugenia Moore, Council President