

BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG COUNCIL MEETING
Planning Session
December 1, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

President Moore called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkesburg, PA.

President Moore extended a holiday greeting to friends and neighbors.

ROLL CALL

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, President Moore requested that a moment of silence be observed to remember victims of violent crimes in the community and surrounding areas.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gail Mitchell-Hall – Weed & Seed Site Coordinator. Ms. Mitchell-Hall presented a card to Council to sign for a resident who is hospitalized. Ms. Mitchell-Hall reported that a Community Service Directory has been developed by Weed & Seed and sent out via email for review and comment. A first run should be available by January 1, 2011. She requested Council's assistance in passing this information along. She also advised to Council of a proposed collaboration between Wilkesburg Weed and Seed and the Urban League of Pittsburgh to establish a program in the community which would provide rental assistance to Wilkesburg residents. There are also other programs offered by the Urban League of Pittsburgh which may be offered. More information will be presented by the Urban League and Wilkesburg Weed and Seed at the next Council meeting on December 15, 2010. President Moore questioned how rental assistance would be provided through the program. Ms. Mitchell-Hall advised that the Urban League would be able to provide that information in their presentation.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson arrived at 7:10 PM.

Rachel Courtney 817 Walnut St. – Ms. Courtney advised Council that she is working on a project to bring a community garden to her neighborhood. She requested a letter of support from Council. The garden is an opportunity for residents to grow their own vegetables and will provide something constructive for young people to do. Ms. Courtney presented a petition supporting the activity and containing 103 signatures. Ms. Courtney read a statement of support from Mr. & Mrs. Tuckerhill at 904 Mifflin Ave. as they were not able to attend the meeting. President Moore questioned the number of community gardens in that particular area and thanked Ms. Courtney for her attendance. Ms. Marcinko reported that she has drafted a letter of support from the Borough of Wilkinsburg and will issue same pending Council approval.

David Wilson - Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services – Mr. Wilson reported 288 calls for the month of November and average response times. EAPHS provided flu vaccines and blood pressure screenings in November. In December, EAPHS will participate in the Wilkinsburg Holiday Parade and provide flu vaccinations after the parade. Flu vaccinations will also be provided at the Wallace Avenue Soup Kitchen on December 31, 2010. President Moore inquired as to how the flu vaccine program is promoted to the community and whether any information had been submitted to the Wilkinsburg Sun. Mr. Wilson responded that flyers were placed in the community.

John Ward – 1221 Swissvale Ave. - Questioned the process by which to establish a one-way restriction on Hill Avenue and requested an update on the status of that request. Ms. Marcinko responded that it had been the consensus of Council to proceed with the one-way restriction and that the restriction must be established by ordinance with two votes of Council. Mr. Ward reported on the recent occurrence of another accident. He also commented on the lack of speed limit signs on Swissvale Avenue.

Terri Supowitz - 310 Hay St. – Ms. Supowitz stated that she recognized there are many issues before Borough Council and their efforts over the past couple of years. Ms. Supowitz expressed concern regarding the impact of drilling in Marcellus Shale on property values and public health. Ms. Supowitz questioned whether Council was aware of any drilling efforts in Wilkinsburg and commented on the environmental impacts of the activity. She requested that Council consider a ban on drilling and leasing of property. Mr. Cohn suggested the topic be placed on the Planning Session agenda in January for further discussion.

Eve Goodman – 324 Pitt St. – Ms. Goodman requested Council's support of the community garden project. She also spoke in support of a drilling ban and requested that Council encourage neighboring communities to do the same. She requested that Council investigate its ability to levy taxes against drilling companies if banning the drilling is deemed illegal by the State Supreme Court.

Josie Bryant – 723 Rebecca Ave. – PHLF Housing Coordinator/Social Work Intern – Ms. Bryant requested Council's support of the community garden project. Ms. Trice questioned whether there would be similar efforts in areas other than Hamnett Place. Ms. Bryant responded that any neighborhood can organize to seek resources for various projects. Ms. Bryant commented on her understanding that PHLF focuses resources on those neighborhoods/communities that are organized.

Joan King – 916 Franklin Ave. – As a representative for the Citizens Advisory Committee on Shade Trees, Ms. King requested Council's approval of funding for tree

removal in 2010. Ms. King updated Council on the status of the Oak Wilt treatment and that removals in Wards One and Two would be priority. Ms. King advised that Nine Mile Run Watershed Association is currently completing its street tree inventory in Wilkesburg and that the information contained in that report will be the basis upon which the removals will be selected. Ms. Marcinko commented that the projected year end expenditure figure for 2010 anticipated the entire budget for shade tree maintenance being expended. Ms. Marcinko advised of the need to retain a company as soon as possible with the year-end approaching. Mr. Cohn commented on expending the remainder of the shade tree funds in Wards One and Two. Ms. Marcinko advised that the priority for removals will be on trees which pose a threat to public safety.

Jessica Burns – 427 Center St. – Ms. Burns spoke in support of the community garden and community-wide building to enrich the lives of children. Mr. Cohn attested to the extent of Ms. Burns' activities with children in the neighborhood. Mr. Cohn expressed his support of the community garden project. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson commented on the improvements in the neighborhood with demolition and rehabilitation of PHLF properties.

Shannon Bennett – 834 Holland Ave. – Ms. Bennett spoke in support of the community garden and expressed the importance of Council working together for the betterment of the entire community. President Moore expressed her agreement with the need to work together.

Linda Law – 908 Wood St. – Ms. Law commended the Shade Tree Committee, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association and the arborist for their efforts in the community. She expressed concern that Holmes Street Park/Playground is not locked. Ms. Law announced that the Holiday Parade will be held on December 4, 2010 and the Ministerial Alliance will be having their Winter Song celebration on December 5, 2010, at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at 4:00 PM. She announced the first time home buyer workshop being held at TRCIL on Wednesday, December 8, 2010 starting at 6:00 PM.

Maureen Copeland – GTECH Strategies - 214 Lexington St. – Ms. Copeland spoke in support of the community garden. She offered to answer any technical questions about the community garden as she has worked with Allegheny Grows on the project.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

President Moore reported:

- Electronic game time in the Children's Library using the Wii game system.
- A holiday program will be held on December 22, 2010 for three to five year olds at the Eastridge Branch of the Wilkesburg Library.
- AARP is offering "Presents for Patients" at certain nursing homes in Allegheny County.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Capital Planning Committee

Mr. Cohn questioned Mr. Lefebvre as to when the committee last met. Mr. Lefebvre responded that the Committee last met in October. Ms. Marcinko commented that the Committee cancelled the last meeting which was scheduled for November 26, 2010.

Finance Committee – Mr. Cohn reported:

- Budget adjustments made following the last budget work session and Finance Committee meeting should have been received by all of Council. Mr. Cohn inquired as to whether there were any questions and summarized the major changes from the Manager's budget as follows:
 - Contracting with the COG for refuse billing with the goal to increase the rate of collection and revenue.
 - Reducing full-time hires from 4 to 2 and hiring additional part-time officers as suggested by Councilwoman Macklin.
 - Plans Examiners to directly bill applicants for all plan reviews and eliminate subsidy by the Borough.
 - Eliminate a part-time Finance Clerk.

Ms. Evans commented on the need to hire directors for the Department of Public Works and Code Enforcement. She had hoped that hiring could have occurred in January and expressed disappointment that this will not occur as the positions have not yet been advertised. Mr. Cohn commented on the loss of efficiency and revenue with the positions not being filled.

Mr. Cohn thanked Mr. Lefebvre for efforts on the legislation to amend the solid waste ordinance to require buildings with 6+ units to contract directly with a hauler for refuse collection. Mr. Cohn commented on the need to work on a plan for refuse collection for the municipal cans and parks and playgrounds.

Mr. Cohn commented that the 2011 budget assumes that the Borough will continue to operate its own Fire Department and anticipates a +/- \$300,000 fund balance at the end of 2011. Mr. Cohn thanked Ms. Marcinko for her efforts at financial management.

Mr. Cohn commented on a new fee schedule he would like to see implemented in January. Mr. Cohn described the proposed fee structure to the audience.

Mr. Cohn reported that the next Tax Committee meeting will be on December 20, 2010 at 5:30 PM.

Personnel Committee – Ms. Trice reported:

- The Committee met on November 18, 2010 at which time Ms. Marcinko provided the status of police officer hiring and the recommendations of the Fact Finder with regard to the SEIU contract.
- The Committee discussed the employment contracts for management employees and employee evaluations.

- The Committee will be recommending the appointment of Susan Holmes to the Community Art & Civic Design Commission.
- The Committee discussed ideas for recruitment of volunteers for various boards, commissions and authorities. Talent Bank applications are posted on-line for those interested.
- The next meeting will be held Wednesday, December 8, 2010 at 6:00 PM. The meeting is not open to the public.

Ms. Trice reported that the TCVCOG Board did not meeting in November. The next TCVCOG Board meeting will be held on Thursday, December 9, 2010 at 6:30 PM.

Public Safety Committee –Mr. Lefebvre reported:

- The next Public Safety Committee meeting will be held December 15, 2010 at 5:30 PM in Council Chambers.

REPORT FROM BOROUGH MANAGER

Ms. Marcinko advised Council that, at the request of President Moore, Councilwoman Macklin presented a proclamation on behalf of Borough Council for National Adoption Month and National Adoption Awareness Day. Council must now ratify the proclamation.

A motion was made by Mr. Cohn, second by Ms. Evans, to approve the proclamation for National Adoption Month and National Adoption Awareness Day.

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

Motion carried

Mr. Marcinko advised that the Borough is prepared to make application for LUPTAP funding from DCED to update the Borough's Zoning Ordinance. The cost of the project is anticipated to be \$34,000 which includes a \$17,000 local share which has been budgeted for 2011. The application was due today and submitted. Ms. Marcinko requested Council approve the submission or the application will be withdrawn.

10-121 LUPTAP Resolution

Authorizes the Borough Manager to make application for a grant through the Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP) on its behalf and that the Borough of Wilkinsburg allocates local resources in the amount of \$17,000 to said project.

Moved: Ms. Evans

Second: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Ms. Evans commented on the importance of moving forward with this project.

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

Motion carried

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Marcinko reported that, thankfully, and due to the efforts of a number of people particularly Jeff Bergman of Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Tree Vitalize, the Borough has been offered the grant award from PENNVEST in the amount of \$500,000.00 for the planting of 500 trees in the Borough of Wilkinsburg.

Approve to accept the grant funding award from PENNVEST in the amount of \$500,000.00.

Moved: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

Second: Mr. Cohn

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

No: Ms. Trice

Motion carried 5:1

Mr. Cohn commented on the great efforts of those working in the community with scarce resources.

Ms. Evans questioned whether it was appropriate at this time to authorize the ordinance to establish the one-way restriction on Hill Avenue and Mill Street. Ms. Marcinko advised that the ordinance will be on the December 15, 2010, agenda for Council to authorize the advertisement.

Mr. Cohn questioned whether the Shade Tree budget should be discussed under Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

On behalf of the Wilkinsburg Redevelopment Authority Kate Luxemburg provided Council with a copy of a PA statute which may provide a process by which to return properties to productive status. The program is estate administration and would be administered at no cost to the Borough through the Wilkinsburg Redevelopment Authority. The program is geared toward families that don't want property that has been inherited.

A motion was made by Mr. Lefebvre, second by Ms. Evans, to authorize Council to issue a letter of support for the Allegheny Grows grant application for the community garden.

Borough of Wilkinsburg
Planning Session Council Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2010

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

Motion carried

Ms. Marcinko advised that the Chamber of Commerce has retained a landscaping company and is proposing to place three cut evergreen trees in the center of the Penn Ave. parklet and to decorate those trees with white lights. They are further proposing to decorate the other two deciduous trees closest to Penn Ave. The landscaping company stakes the trees into the ground. It is proposed that the Borough will provide the power for the lights on the trees.

A motion was made by Mr. Cohn, second by Ms. Evans, to approve the request of the Chamber of Commerce to place and decorate trees in the Penn Ave parklet.

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

Motion carried

Ms. Marcinko advised that she has received a request from the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry for a courtesy parking pass for the Meals on Wheels van. Mr. Cohn questioned whether there should be any concerns with regard to precedent setting. Solicitor Storch advised that Council is within their right to authorize the parking pass request.

Moved: Mr. Cohn

Second: Ms. McCarthy-Johnson

President Moore questioned whether a pass will be provided to volunteers. Ms. Storch responded that would be appropriate.

Ms. Evans expressed concerns with expanding the request to include volunteers and commented that the request was specifically for the Meals on Wheels van, not volunteers.

A motion was made by Mr. Cohn, second by Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, to approve the request of the Wilkinsburg Community Ministry for a courtesy parking pass for the Meals on Wheels van.

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

Motion carried

A motion was made by Mr. Cohn, second by Ms. Evans, to authorize the Borough Manager to expend the balance of the 2010 Shade Tree budget for removal of dangerous

trees based upon the recently completed Shade Tree Inventory with a priority on trees in Ward One and Ward Two.

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

Motion carried

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson announced that a toy drive is being sponsored in the Borough and toys and donations are being sought for children ages newborn to three years or age as well as ages fourteen to eighteen. The fiscal agent for the project is Family Support Primary Care Health System.

Ms. Marcinko inquired as to Council's direction with regard to the proposed acquisition of the Eastridge Library branch building. Mr. Joel Minnigh, Library Director, provided Council a summary of the proposal.

Ms. Evans questioned who would retain ownership of the building. Mr. Minnigh advised that the Borough would. She further questioned the anticipated operating budget for the next several years and inquired as to the condition of the property and whether appraisals had been obtained. Mr. Minnigh advised that two appraisals had been obtained. Ms. Evans inquired as to whether any commitments for funding had been obtained and Mr. Minnigh advised that private donors had been approached as well as State Representative Joseph Preston. There was a question whether additional revenue sources had been investigated for the property and Mr. Minnigh advised that there is the possibility of renting space in the building. There is currently one other tenant. Mr. Cohn questioned the proposed sale price. Mr. Minnigh advised that the church had informally indicated that it would be willing to accept as little as \$200,000. Mr. Minnigh further reported that he had asked the church to consider donating the building to the Borough and also requested an extension past December 31, 2010 in which to make an offer. Mr. Cohn inquired as to the source of the funds to purchase the building. Ms. Marcinko advised that a year-end cash balance is anticipated for 2010. Mr. Cohn questioned whether debt could be issued for the purchase. Mr. Cohn questioned whether a net increase in expenditures would be anticipated with use of the entire building. Mr. Minnigh advised that he has actually projected a decrease. Mr. Lefebvre questioned who would be responsible for maintaining the building. Mr. Lefebvre further questioned the cost for liability insurance. Mr. Minnigh advised that no increase in premium is anticipated and that the property would be within the Borough's inventory for their insurance schedule. Mr. Cohn questioned what action needs to be taken and whether Borough management/administration would be participating in the discussions. Ms. Marcinko suggested any action be deferred until full Council is present. Ms. Storch commented on the request to the church to donate the building and suggested that action may be taken at the next meeting to accept the donation as an alternative to purchase if that is approved by the church board.

Borough of Wilkinsburg
Planning Session Council Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2010

Council recessed to executive session at approximately 9:35 PM to discuss litigation.

Council came out of executive session at approximately 9:54 PM and the meeting was reconvened.

Being no further business, on motion by Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, second by Mr. Cohn, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 PM.

Eugenia Moore, Council President