

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Council Work Session
June 5, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

President Cohn called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were Mr. Lefebvre (via telephone), Ms. Ervin, Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Goodman, and President Cohn. Also present was Marla Marcinko, Borough Manager. Ms. Evans, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, and Mayor John Thompson were absent. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, a moment of silence was observed to remember victims of violent crime.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Wilbert Wright – 1315 Clark St. – Contended that he had another stroke due to negligence of the Wilkinsburg Police Department in denying medical treatment.

Kate Luxemburg – 432 Rebecca Ave. – Commented that the address for the sidewalk variance is 413 Rebecca, not 417 as stated on the agenda. She commented on the 1967 action by Borough Council to accept Green St. Park from the Wilkinsburg School District. She commented that the Wilkinsburg School District utilized the State formula to calculate its millage rate for 2013. She stated that the Borough millage rate is set above the permitted 5% windfall amount.

President Cohn commented that the Borough and School District have discussed how to proceed in establishing millage rates. He stated there is a lot at stake if millage rates are lowered before all of the assessment information is finalized and analyzed. President Cohn commented that there had been discussion about preparing a joint communication piece with the School District.

Pastor Beverly Funchus Harris 1407 Clark St. – She expressed her frustration with trying to get potholes fixed on Clark St. (1400 Block). She commented on having to pay to have an exterminator get rid of raccoons around her property. She stated that they are damaging her roof.

President Cohn stated that he understands the issue. Ms. Harris suggested having a fee charged to all residents in order to be able to afford to provide this service to the community. President Cohn commented that this has been a long-term problem and the raccoons will travel through storm sewers to other parts of the community. He stated that the Borough can investigate how this issue is handled in other communities and advised that the Borough employees are no longer

permitted to trap the animals. Ms. Moore noted that raccoons are out during the day and believes there is an increase in population due to weather changes.

Ms. Trice commented about deer and other animals. She stated that there is overgrowth at 1419 Clark Street which is a breeding spot for these animals.

CAPITAL PLANNING

1. Discussion – Memorandum of Understanding – Nine Mile Run Sewershed.

David Gilliland, Borough Engineer, provided an update on the ALCOSAN Administrative Consent Orders and Consent Decrees. All communities within the ALCOSAN service area are being asked to consider the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the upcoming work required under the ALCOSAN EPA Consent Order for each sewershed to which they drain. The purpose of the MOU is to coordinate, complete, and submit a feasibility study for each sewershed. Wilkinsburg is located within two sewersheds; M-47 Nine Mile Run and T-04 Falls Run, which runs parallel to Ardmore Boulevard. Wilkinsburg has a small area in the T-04 Falls Run sewershed. Sewer upgrades included in the study will not need to be constructed until after 2026 or possibly 2030 to 2040 due to an “affordability factor” which allows qualifying communities to obtain an extension. Costs for each community were calculated using peak flow capacity for each system rather than the total number of users. Storm water does not flow directly into the Borough’s sanitary sewer system. Wilkinsburg’s share will be 27.5 % of total project costs for the M-47 sewershed or approximately \$7,450,000. The Borough’s share for the T-04 sewershed will be 6.1 % of total project costs or approximately \$20,000. The MOU does not provide for the commitment of funds but indicates an agreement to the method by which costs were allocated. Mr. Gilliland indicated his agreement with the cost allocation methodology. It is presumed that the improvements will commence in systems closest to the ALCOSAN treatment plant which is located in Brighton Heights. It is recommended that the Borough begin building reserve funds for the improvements. There has been discussion about ALCOSAN taking over the interceptors in the community systems.

Mr. Gilliland advised that bids were opened today for the demolition of 427 South Avenue. The structure has collapsed onto the occupied house next door. \$15,000 was awarded from an emergency CDBG grant from the County for the demolition. Unis Demolition submitted the low bid of \$12,900.

A motion was made by Ms. Trice, second by Ms. Goodman, to award the contract for the demolition of 427 South Avenue to Unis Demolition in the amount of \$12,900.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Ms. Ervin inquired as to whether the Abandoned Structures Inventory had been updated to reflect the most recent round of demolition. Mr. Gilliland advised that the list was updated last August and it must be updated to remove the Borough-owned properties which were most recently demolished.

GENERAL MATTERS

1. Authorizing the advertisement of Ordinance No. 2907 – Amending Chapter 112 relating to Poultry.

President Cohn explained that the legislation provides for the raising of a limited number of chickens in the Borough. In preparing this legislation, ordinances from other communities were reviewed and the legislation before Council is a simplified version. Ms. Trice inquired as to the need for (A) on Page 2. Ms. Marcinko stated that the purpose is to change the definition to exclude chicks and hens from prohibition. Ms. Trice pointed out that Section (3) (2) should read “chick” instead of “check”. Ms. Goodman inquired as to whether there is a plan for chicken seizure. President Cohn responded that the Humane Society will work with chicken advocacy groups to place chickens which may be identified as a nuisance. Mr. Lefebvre stated that the Planning Commission, in conjunction with its review of the new Zoning Ordinance, is looking at this as a permitted use and wants to ensure the legislation and Zoning Ordinance are aligned. Ms. Trice inquired as to whether Council should first review what is under consideration by the Planning Commission. President Cohn inquired as to the stage of this review process by the Planning Commission and Mr. Lefebvre advised that he was not sure about specific provisions but stated that the Commission is in favor of allowing chickens to be raised. Ms. Moore commented that Forest Hills recently adopted an ordinance which permits chicken raising and bee keeping. President Cohn suggested moving forward with the proposed legislation.

Moved: Ms. Goodman

Second: Mr. Lefebvre

Yes: Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Goodman, Mr. Lefebvre, President Cohn

No: Ms. Ervin

Motion carried 5:1

Ms. Trice asked inquired about action for residents who may currently be raising chickens. Ms. Marcinko stated that this would be a violation of the current ordinance. President Cohn suggested that if there is a problem with someone currently raising hens, then it should be addressed. If not, the Borough should not worry about it.

2. Approving Resolution No. 13-044 – Street Closure – MADDAD’s Father’s Day Event.

Moved: Ms. Goodman

Second: Ms. Moore

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

3. Approving Resolution No. 13-045 – Street closure – Blessing of the Bikes.

Moved: Ms. Ervin

Second: Ms. Trice

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

4. Approving Resolution No. 13-046 – Street closure – Wilkinsburg High School Prom Line-up.

Moved: Ms. Trice

Second: Ms. Ervin

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

5. Approving Resolution No. 13-047 – Hiring Alyssa Fahringer – Adult Assistant Services – Library.

Moved: Ms. Moore

Second: Ms. Goodman

Ms. Trice inquired as to whether this position is an SEIU position. Ms. Marcinko stated that it is and no bargaining unit employee bid on the position. Ms. Moore commented that the Library Board interviewed the candidate and were impressed with her qualifications.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

6. Authorizing the advertisement of Administrative Assistant positions for DPW and Code Enforcement.

Moved: Ms. Goodman

Second: Mr. Lefebvre

Ms. Trice inquired as to whether the positions are SEIU positions. Ms. Marcinko explained that the essential job functions exceed general secretarial/clerical duties and involve personnel, budget and supervisory functions, therefore they are not SEIU positions. Ms. Ervin inquired as to whether the DPW assistant would be stationed in the municipal building. Ms. Marcinko advised that that plan is to have that individual work out of the DPW garage. There is no restriction on residency. Ms. Trice stated that she believes residency should be required.

Yes: Ms. Goodman, Ms. Moore, Mr. Lefebvre, President Cohn

No: Ms. Trice, Ms. Ervin

Motion carried 4:2.

7. Request for variance from requirements of the Sidewalk Ordinance – 413 Rebecca Ave.

Ms. Moore inquired if the sidewalk is heaved and whether only this particular address is affected. Ms. Marcinko advised that the request is for one property at 413 Rebecca Avenue, not 417 as stated on the agenda.

Brenda Smith, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association, stated that NMRWA has received grant funding for this project and chose this location as the tree which is heaving the sidewalk and causing a hazard is one of the oldest in the Borough and a candidate for a Heritage Tree designation. Ms. Moore inquired as to whether other sidewalks were reviewed. Ms. Smith advised that a systematic review was not performed but she is aware of other sidewalks which could be candidates for a similar project and she is seeking additional funding to expand the program. Ms. Ervin asked if other, similar sidewalk issues can be referred to Ms. Smith with the answer being yes.

Moved: Ms. Trice

Second: Ms. Moore

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

8. Approving Resolution No. 13-048 – Hiring Jemel Morris as Driver – DPW.

Moved: Ms. Goodman

Second: Ms. Ervin

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

9. Approving Resolution No. 13-049 – Hiring Kevin Perry as Driver – DPW.

Moved: Ms. Goodman

Second: Ms. Moore

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Wright reported cars parked illegally at Penn and Trenton and the busses will not stop with them parked there. The matter was referred to the Police Department.

Ms. Moore reported that the meeting hosted by Senator Ferlo regarding the Wilkinsburg School District was well-attended. The purpose of the meeting was to start a conversation and he is seeking to form a committee to further explore the status and future of the District. President Cohn commented that a survey of public opinion about the school district has been distributed and there is a link on the WCDC website to same.

Ms. Moore commented that she no longer receives the Penny Saver and many residents no longer receive the Wilkinsburg Sun through this distribution.

Ms. Trice inquired about the status of the RFP for delinquent tax collection and requested the matter be placed on the 6/19/13 agenda for discussion. Ms. Marcinko commented that there was a discussion on this matter at a recent Council meeting and Council was asked to submit their concerns, questions and suggestions to her. She did not receive any feedback.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Ms. Trice, second by Ms. Moore, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 P.M.

Jason Cohn, Council President