

Borough of Susquehanna Depot
Minutes September 14, 2016

Present: Susan Crawford, John Hendrickson, Barbara Larsen, Roy Williams, Joseph Varsik and Deborah Zayas

Absent: Dana Rockwell

Also Present: Margaret Biegert, Attorney Michael Briechele, John Cramer

Guests: John Sholtiss, Chris & Dan Vinsko, Ciro Magliuo, A. Plonka, John Benedict, Lisa Bednarz, Ruth Benedict, Theresa Felter, Jenn Brink, Emerson Whitehead, Greg Lake, Anthony Stark, Ceil Vacarro, Andrew Stark, Adam DellaPlaine, C. Jason Larsen, Lillian Senko, Chris and Dan Vinsko, Emerson Whitehead, Staci Wilson (Several others present who did not sign in)

MOTION: By Roy Williams seconded by John Hendrickson to approve the agenda. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Barbara Larsen seconded by Sue Crawford to approve the minutes of August 10, 2016 as amended. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Sue Crawford seconded by John Hendrickson to approved the minutes of September 6, 2016 as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Deborah Zayas seconded by Sue Crawford to accept the bid for the East Street Wall project from Stone's Excavating using the Master's blocks at \$28,600. All present voted yes. Motion Carried.

MOTION: By Roy Williams seconded by Deborah Zayas to accept the bill list as presented. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Deborah Zayas Seconded by Barbara Larson to make the following line item changes: Add 413.12a Codes Admin \$1600.00; Change line item: 301.20 to \$19,250; 413.12 to \$17,408; 413.13 to \$65.00; 413.14 to \$1600.00; 413.20 to 925.00; 413.40 \$140.00; 413.45 to \$3156.00. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Barbara Larson seconded by Sue Crawford to accept the Susquehanna Fire Department 2017, 2018 and 2019 contract for fire protection at a rate of \$24,175.35. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By Deborah Zayas seconded by Roy Williams to hire Joseph Collura to perform the 2016 audit for \$2,400.00. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: Barbara Larsen seconded by Roy Williams to hire Community Planning & Management LLC to assist with zoning updates at cost of \$85.00 per hour. Not to exceed \$15,000. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By John Hendrickson seconded by Sue Crawford to extend Greg Davey's hours to 32 per week at \$13.50 Per hour. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

MOTION: By John Hendrickson seconded by Barbara Larsen to schedule a budget meeting on Monday, September 26, 2016 at 5:00 PM and the Zoning update meetings at 5:00 PM for the second and fourth Monday of the month beginning October 10,2016 until the updates are completed. All present voted yes. Motion carried.

Joe Varsik opened the meeting at 6:00 PM. Council approved the agenda and minutes of August 10, 2016 and September 6, 2016.

Public Comment:

Joe Varsik reminded visitors of the public comment rules. Andrew Elliot of Erie Ave said he was having issues with the Franklin Ave./ Penn Dot project. He has concerns about rocks blocking the stream. He reminded council that until recently, he had forest behind his home and now his yard overlooks a mountain side of rocks. He has COPD and has been adversely affected by the constant dust from the construction. Along with breathing difficulties the dust is covering everything and killing his grass. The foreman of Penn Dot's construction contact PAWC for permission to tap into a hydrant and spray the area in an attempt to keep the dust down. PAWC would not give permission. Mr. Elliot had concerns about the 10" drain pipe coming from Franklin Ave. He and Adam DellaPlaine complained about the noise and construction spot lights shining on their property and into their homes. They asked about a noise ordinance and how much longer the project was expected to last. Mr. Elliot also complained about the debris in the

Home Center lot adjacent to his home. Joe Varsik said that the Franklin Ave project had been a huge issue for the whole community. They have had a hard time getting answers to questions. Roy Williams said he will meet with Mr. Elliot the following day at 3:30 PM.

John Benedict spoke for the many Franklin Ave residents attending the meeting. He stated that their issue is about drug dealers invading their neighborhood. He advised council that their neighborhood used to be "Kid Friendly", but now residents are afraid to let their children play in the front yards. They believe it is due to the lack of law enforcement, both locally and from the state. He did thank Officer Cramer who has been helping and Roy Williams for condemning one of the suspected drug houses. Mr. Benedict said that residents were told that they would have heavy patrols in their neighborhood, but aside from Officer Cramer, they have not seen one patrol. He told council that they are afraid to let their children out, as there have been threats. Along with the recently condemned house, they felt there were two other houses in their neighborhood involved with drug activity. He told council that the night of the gun shooting, it took 40 minutes for the police to respond. He said there are constantly 4-wheelers up and down the neighborhood, sometimes at 60-70 MPH. They would like to start some kind of neighborhood watch and work together with the police. He told council that he had been threatened from someone at the suspected drug houses and told "Go to sleep and your dead".

Joe Varsik said the District Attorney should be contacted.

Mr. Benedict wanted to know what was being done with condemned house. People had been evicted, but continue to come back at all hours. He told council of another incident involving people from the suspected drugs homes threatening neighborhood people. One time it took six hours for someone to respond. Residents felt this is unacceptable and that someone was going to be killed before something happens.

Joe Varsik said that it was unfortunate that the borough does not have 24 hour a day police coverage. He had problems in his own neighborhood, but there are certain situations when police can and cannot respond. Roy Williams said that residents can provide tips to make to police aware. It is up to council to set the parameters of the what, where and how's and to form a schedule for what the residents deserve.

Joe Varsik asked if the problem was still going on. Barb Larson said it has been very difficult situation.

Roy Williams advised council that after the shooting, charges were dropped on proper crimes. He said "It cannot continue".

Joe Varsik will discuss the Gibson police response issues with the mayor and the DA. He was assured that the state police would be responsive when the borough police were off duty.

An audience member stated that the activity from the suspected drug houses goes on all the time and keeping her up constantly.

Sue Crawford felt it was time to regroup with our own police and a neighborhood watch.

Mr. Plonka stood and said he owned the Starrucca House. When he got his windows shot out he had to deal with the Gibson police because Chief Sweet did not do anything. He felt that Chief Sweet should be drug tested. Joe Varsik banged the gavel and told Mr. Plonka that he could not say this during the meeting. Mr. Plonka continued saying "He is a f-expetive A-expetive and a God D-expetive drug addict." Joe Varsik asked for Mr. Plonka to be escorted out.

Dan Vinsko said that the problem is not just on Franklin Ave. He believes there are also two other houses of concern on Willow Ave. He said that the Chief of Police is the problem. "You can't just look the other way". He felt if he had shot a gun, he would be in jail. All the people involved in the shooting incident just walked home later that night. He told council that one time John Creamer was confronted by 15-16 people from these suspected houses. Officer Creamer called for backup locally and the State police. He could get no back up so several neighbors stood with him. Deborah Zayas wanted to clarify that John Creamer was on his own in a volatile situation, with no requested police back up, so the residents stood with him. She thanked Officer Creamer for all he had done.

Joe Varsik said that there are issues that need to be taken care of at the local and state level. He apologized, but glad that the residents are working together and came to the meeting to discuss everything. Sue Crawford said that everyone knows how bad it is and felt something has to be done.

Anthony Stark asked why a child that had lived at the condemned house was still being dropped off at the house by the school bus. Roy Williams stated that Children and Youth had to notify the school that the parents no longer lived at that address. He had recently contacted C&Y so that the child and parent will no longer have a reason to be near the condemned house.

Deborah Zayas said it was good that everyone came out and reminded residents that there is a meeting every month to discuss town issues and invited the residents back. She felt it was important that everyone who sees something should say something. Sue Crawford felt the neighborhood watch would be a good project. Barbara Larsen asked if an executive session to discuss a legal issue could be added to the agenda.

DPW:

Joe Varsik opened the following bids for the East Street Wall project: Le Rauch Excavating \$64,546, Stone's Excavating for \$40,600 using Redi-Rock Blocks and \$28,600. Roy Williams discussed concrete vs block, material erosion control, Roy explained that the contractors were given a choice of various solutions on specs sent by Penn Dot. All bidders were required to have a pre-bid meeting. Three contractors met with Roy and had additional recommendations that were not included in the bid. The bidders were all told that the sidewalk no longer needed to be replaced, but guiderails needed to be added. Contractors were later given Penn Dot guiderail specifications. Roy felt utilizing the Master's block for the project would be adequate. John Hendrickson agreed. Council accepted the bid from Stone Excavating using the Master's block at \$28,600.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report:

Council reviewed the bill list. Barbara Larsen questioned a \$450 for the camera Shelf. Joe Varsik explained the needs. She asked if there would be any additional costs. Margaret explained that the borough is responsible for the electrical hook up. Council approved the bill list and reviewed Treasurer's report. Council was given a copy of the MMO with the anticipated 2017 police pension contribution needs of \$13,558. Council approved line item changes to allow for additional expenditures for the codes administration position. Council was given an overview copy of insurance coverage and a workman's compensation physician list and asked if they would like any other physician's added to the listed. No other names were recommended. Council was given a copy of the Susquehanna Fire Department 2017, 2018 and 2019 contract for fire protection at a rate of \$24,175.35. Council approved the contract. The borough had received an engagement letter from Joseph Collura to perform the 2016 audit, with not increase at \$2,400.00. Council approved. After reviewing a proposal council voted to hire Community Planning & Management LLC to assist with zoning updates. Sue Crawford advised council that home coming was scheduled for October 15th. The fire will still be held Friday night prior and the parade will be that Saturday morning prior to the game.

Finance:

The finance committee received a request from Roy Williams and Kevin McKee to extend Greg Davey's hours to 32 per week throughout the year and increase his pay to \$13.50 per hour. The additional 2016 cost of \$1,296.00 for the additional DPW p/t hour could come from DPW gas/oil line item. Council agreed. Council discussed the need to schedule a budget meeting. After some discussion council scheduled a budget meeting on Monday, September 26, 2016 at 5:00 PM and the Zoning update meetings at 5:00 PM for the second and fourth Monday of the month beginning October 10, 2016 until the updates are complete.

Mayor/Police Report:

The mayor was not present. Michael Briechele said that he was contacted by the mayor to meet with her and the chief to discuss the police policy. He was not asked to review it, but looked at some non-legal issues for modification. He suggested the police department join the Police Chiefs association where pre-printed policies are available to police departments. Those policies have already had legal review. He also suggested that council review the policy every four years. He also recommended checking with the insurance company to see if they offered preventative employment practices program for the police department.

Emergency Management:

John Hendrickson gave a brief update on the Fire at Drinker Creek Beverage. He reminded everyone on just how quick a fire can spread and the importance of checking heating systems.

Codes:

Roy Williams spoke with a representative of the owners of Drinker Creek Beverage. They intend on rebuilding. People have been spotted rummaging for scrap metal and he asked for increased police patrols in the area. In a referencing the condemned house on Franklin Ave, Barbara Larsen had said, had it not been for Roy Williams and John Creamer nothing would have been done. They both have come whenever someone requested them to. She does not believe that people understand how volatile the situation is. Council thanked both Roy and John. One resident had mentioned that in one instance on Franklin Ave, it took the State police 7 hours and 30 minutes to respond.

Roy Williams explained that the owner of the condemned property lives near Pittsburg, but has a representative who is dealing with the contents. Prior tenants will have to contact the owner to pick up their items. Michael Briechle said that the contents are the homeowner's responsibility and suggest that he rent a storage unit. One resident felt that professionals dealing in hazmat may be needed to assist with some of the content.

Michael Briechle said that the secretary had sent him an e-mail asking him to hold off on the Unregistered / Uninspected Vehicle Ordinance. The secretary did not remember sending him that e-mail.

Roy had met with Ken Marino/NEIC regarding the Haynes building. The back portion defiantly has to come down. The main portion of the building has been exposed to the elements and there is much water damage and endangering the buildings on either side. He had received two quotes, one for stabilizing the back and the other for full demolition.

Joe Varsik asked if the owner could be taken to court. Sue Crawford asked if the owner would still own the property if the borough paid to have it taken down.

The quote for total demolition would be \$47,500. Because of its location, it would have to be taken down by hand. A tunnel would have to be built on the sidewalk for safety. The space is 33-35 wide by 90-110 deep. Ken will get some literature. The board will need more information.

Old Business:

Michael Briechle gave Roy a sample easement form for the community board. Michael will need additional information from Roy to complete.

Council was provided with another copy of the County Commissioners letter along with a copy of the response from New Milford. Margaret asked council if they would like her to draft a letter stating that council is not in favor of county wide zoning, but would like them to consider passing a clean air ordinance.

Council went into executive session to discuss a personnel issue at 7:27 PM

Council reconvened at 8:10 PM

Meeting Adjourned at 8:11 PM