

Green Lane Borough
Green Lane, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania
Borough Council Meeting
July 8, 2021
Minutes

The Borough Council met on the above date in the Banquet Hall of the Green Lane Fire House. Signage was posted at the Borough Office and on the Borough's website to advise people that the meeting was being held in the Banquet Hall. Borough Council waited five minutes past the 7 p.m. starting time to allow people to walk from the Borough office to the Banquet Hall. The meeting was called to order by President Brian Carpenter at 7:05 p.m., and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: President Brian Carpenter and Vice President Gerald Godshall and Council Members Jack Findley, Jonathan Guntz, and Darren Landis.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHER OFFICIALS PRESENT: Solicitor Dave Comer, Secretary/Treasurer Mary T. Garber, Code Enforcement/Zoning Officer John Membrino, and Engineer Joe Carlin.

OFFICIALS ABSENT: Mayor Lynn Wolfe.

MOTION ON MINUTES: A motion was made by Gerald Godshall to accept the minutes of the June 10, 2021, Council meeting. Seconded by Jonathan Guntz. Motion passed.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Wolfe was visiting family in Indiana and could not attend the meeting, so she submitted a written report prior to the meeting. It included the following:

- Councilman Jack Findley took decibel readings of the cicadas, which were an incredible 87 decibels.
- The Mayor married one couple this past month.
- She has not received an email from Robin Reinert to date with information of names and departments she spoke with at the County and FEMA pertaining to the waterway in her backyard.
- She received several calls from residents throughout the past two weeks regarding the tree harvesting. She has personally witnessed a select cut to create a healthy forest and seen the benefits. She said, "In my opinion, it may seem like a lot now, but we are being good stewards of the property and resources we have to enjoy for years to come."
- She also thought we may want to try something at Isaac Smith Park that she saw near the river in Indiana: "Dog poop scoopers on every telephone pole reminding dogs to have their owners pick up after them. Genius!"

PUBLIC SAFETY/EMERGENCY REPORTS: (State Police, Ambulance and Fire Company reports on file)

VISITORS: Borough residents Rick Stamper and Trevor Reed (Reed's Barber Shop owner), and Perkiomen Valley Brewery owner Tom Weiss.

- Mr. Weiss reported that the storm drain in front of 121 Gravel Pike continues to back up during storms. President Carpenter responded that the drain has been cleaned, but water is still backing up during storms so he will be looking into having the pipes jetted out.
- Mr. Weiss also expressed concern about abandoned vehicles and other items being accumulated at 120 Gravel Pike (Rockwell's). President Carpenter said the Borough will take the steps it can take to address the issues on the property.
- Council President Brian Carpenter said he spoke to the owner of the property at 120 Gravel Pike and was told that the owner expects to acquire a barn to house the items now at the property.
- Mr. Reed also expressed concerns and frustration about the property at 120 Gravel Pike. Among his concerns were: abandoned vehicles with deflated tires covered with junk and construction materials spread all over including plywood with nails sticking up. He said 68 customers in one month came into his barber shop at 118 Gravel Pike and mentioned the mess. He said there are safety issues such as the front porch roof being propped up; items blocking the back kitchen entrance; and people appearing to be living in vehicles in the parking lot. He said trailers come in and out all day long with junk.
- Mr. Reed also expressed concerns about safety hazards on the Yoder's and greenhouse properties.
- Councilmember Gerald Godshall called the Rockwell's property a "blister on the community" and said Council should be able to do something about it.
- President Carpenter said the concerns were "duly noted" and that the state police should be called if anyone sees that laws may be being broken on the property. He also said the Fire Marshal would be contacted to inspect the property.
- Mr. Reed said that the owners of his building (the Goschenhoppen Historians) have installed special lighting and written letters to the Borough regarding the problem.
- Rick Stamper of 100 Green Street was also concerned about the condition of the property at 120 Gravel Pike and said another business owner installed flood lights and security cameras on their property because of the problem. Mr. Stamper said the lights have no shroud on them and shine directly into his house and into the roadway. President Carpenter said he has addressed this with PennDOT.
- Mr. Stamper also asked if the zoning for that property is being violated.
- Councilman Godshall said the Borough needs to take action.
- Mr. Reed requested that the local ordinances be enforced. President Carpenter said the Borough has had numerous complaints about the property, but this is the first time he has heard that the building is a safety hazard.
- Solicitor Dave Comer said the new information that the visitors have brought to Council is very helpful.
- Councilman Godshall said he will contact the State Police regarding the issue.
- Mr. Stamper also complained about fireworks in the Borough. He had called the State Police to report the incidents. President Carpenter said fireworks laws are extremely hard to enforce because the police must see it happening. He said he hopes the

legislature is going to correct the changes they recently made to the fireworks' sales laws. Carpenter said the police were notified of the exact location of the fireworks that he witnessed.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

- Amendments have been made to the Sunshine Act to require meeting agendas for any governmental meeting to be made public at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting by posting on the website and meeting location, and they must be made available at the meeting. The law is effective on August 30, 2021.
- The biggest change is that any agenda items that may require action by the Council must be included on the published agenda. In Summary, the new rules include:
 - Post the meeting agenda at least 24 hours prior to a meeting, and the agenda must include a list of each matter that may be considered at the meeting.
 - Physically post the agenda at the meeting location as well as at the principal office of the political subdivision; and
 - Distribute copies of the agenda to all members of the public in attendance.
 - These new rules would not apply for conference, work or executive sessions.
- On the fireworks question, the Solicitor said there is some legislation in process that could reverse the changes to the law that were made by the state legislature that loosened fireworks laws. He said Green Lane is not the only municipality dealing with this problem. It appears to be many municipalities in Pennsylvania that have had issues.

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER: (report on file)

- McCuskin Properties LLC – vacant Lumber Street lot: The property owners submitted an application for a variance to the Zoning Hearing Board. The Zoning Hearing Board Solicitor determined the application is deficient and must re-submitted.
- 770 Lumber Street: Mr. Membrino has been in contact with an officer from the PA DEP who is investigating a complaint received regarding this property.
- Macoby Street. A roll-off dumpster was placed on Macoby Street blocking the entire left lane. Mr. Membrino contacted Whitetail Disposal and received a call back from the dispatcher who was going to get the dumpster removed.

ENGINEER'S REPORT:

- Montco 2040 Grant for Route 29 Sidewalk
 - Design is in progress. Anticipate first PennDOT submission the week of 7/11/21, but PennDOT review could take more than six months.
 - Councilmember Godshall asked how residents would be notified about the sidewalk project. The Engineer said that anyone impacted would be notified after the project was approved by PennDOT.
- 2021 CTP GRANT – Green Street Repaving:
 - Submission due at end of July.
 - Estimates were updated, very minor change in cost to a total of \$247,188 total for the project and a grant request amount of \$197,950 and Borough match of \$49,438. A resolution regarding the request and funding is required. Gerald Godshall

made a motion to approve the resolution requesting funding from Montgomery County for the Green Street Repaving Project. Second by Jack Findley. Motion approved and so ordered.

- ARLE Grant for Route 29 and Main Street Signal Maintenance and Upgrades:
 - Has been submitted as requested in the amount of \$53,034. No match or resolution required.
- MS4 Permitting:
 - Employee education information and public participation plan has been provided under separate cover for review as part of the ongoing permitting requirements.
- MacIntosh Builders, Upper Ridge Road:
 - Engineer Gilmore has received revised plans, and all prior comments have been resolved.

REGIONAL PLANNING: Councilman Findley reported that a survey is being designed to distribute to the public.

SEWER AUTHORITY: Problems continue regarding collections of fees.

ROAD COMMITTEE: Work will be done on the inlet at Walnut Street and Route 29.

PARK COMMITTEE: Councilman Godshall reported that a tire needed to be fixed on one of the mowers. He spoke to the Stoltzfus logging company about cutting down dead ash trees in the park.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

- Council President Carpenter recommended the Borough accounts be switched to Harleysville Bank from Univest Bank due to the difference in fees charged by the two banks. Council Member Godshall made a motion to switch the accounts and approve the necessary paperwork. Second by Councilman Guntz. Motion passed and so ordered. The accounts to be moved include the MacIntosh Escrow Account, ARPA Funds Account, General Account, and the Motor License Account.
- Jonathan Guntz made a motion for the signers on the account to be the Council President, Vice-president and Mayor. Currently, Brian Carpenter, Gerald Godshall, and Lynn Wolfe. Second by Gerald Godshall. Motion passed and so ordered.
- President Godshall recommended closing the Pederson Escrow account, which has been inactive for years and only has a balance of about \$150. He instructed the secretary to send a check to Mr. Pederson to close out the account.
- The logger for the forest management project has paid in full \$65,150. The Borough has received half of the ARPA Funds allotted by the federal government, \$26,481.31. The balance will be distributed next year.
- Councilman Godshall asked about the charges from PECO for street lights and was told that the monthly charge is for electricity. He also asked about the payment to Charles Higgins. President Carpenter explained that is for the annual inspection of the Main Street and Route 29 traffic lights. He also asked how the Fire Marshal is paid. President Carpenter said he is paid by the hour for any service he provides because there is not a Fire Marshal with the Green Lane Fire Company.

- Councilman Landis made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and pay all bills. Second by Councilman Guntz. Motion passed and so ordered.

CORRESPONDENCE: The Borough received a letter from Sen. Bob Mensch congratulating the Borough for being awarded a Montco 2040 grant.

OLD BUSINESS:

- The Borough Secretary gave an update on the progress of the TCDI Planning grant project.
 - The second Steering Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 29, 2021, in the Fire Company Banquet Hall. Results of the community survey and traffic study were presented. Councilmen Findley and Godshall also attended the meeting.
 - The next steps include stakeholder interviews with the County Parks Department and local business owners.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Council President Carpenter noted that the Borough Secretary has not received a pay increase in two and a half years. He recommended that her salary be increased to \$25 per hour. Councilmember Godshall made a motion to approve the increase. Second by Jack Findley. Motion approved and so ordered.
- President Carpenter also noted that payment to Mayor Lynn Wolfe was included on the Treasurer's Report for work that she is doing for the Borough to clean up files and assist with responses to Right-to-Know Requests. He said this is a temporary position, but the Borough may need to hire someone to do this if large time-consuming requests continue to be made. Solicitor Dave Comer said he believes the RTK officer must be a Borough official, but he will check to see if someone can be hired just to do that job. In the meantime, Mayor Wolfe will assist with that role.
- Councilman Guntz asked to have repairs made to Walnut Street at Upper Ridge Road and to check potholes at Walnut and Route 29 and on Green Street. President Carpenter said he will check it out.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, a motion was made by Gerald Godshall to adjourn and seconded by Jonathan Guntz. Motion passed and so ordered.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary T. Garber, Borough Secretary