

Council Work Session
February 4, 2015
Council Chambers

The regular monthly Work Session of Newtown Borough Council was called to order at 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday, February 4, 2015, by President of Council Robert Walker.

Present were Councillors Grunde-McLaughlin, Gusty, King, Walker and Warren; Mayor Swartz; Solicitor Bolla; and Engineer Canales. Councillor Auerweck was excused.

Amendments to the Agenda

There were no amendments to the agenda.

Public to Be Heard

Ted Schmidt voiced concern about chipping paint at the base of the traffic light standards at the two intersections on State Street and thought it was PennDOT's responsibility, but he questioned whether they would ever do anything about it. Mr. Walker said the Borough is aware of the issue and that Scott Dengler will be looking into painting them in late spring or early summer.

Newtown Theatre Resolution

Mayor Swartz explained that the Newtown Theatre needed a Resolution from Council in order to obtain a Special Event Liquor License to serve alcohol at the February 22, 2015, Oscar Party they are co-hosting with the Newtown Arts Company. Andy Smith, representing the Theatre, said the license would allow the Theatre to have six events during a calendar year.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councillor Warren, seconded by Councillor King, and carried unanimously to approve Resolution 02-04-15 recognizing the Newtown Hall Theatre as a non-profit organization whose several purposes include protecting the architectural heritage of Newtown Borough.

Mayor's Report – Charles Swartz

Mayor Swartz reported that he recently installed the 2015 Newtown Fire Association officers.

The Mayor reminded Council about the upcoming 125th Anniversary Newtown Fire Association Awards Banquet on March 28, 2015.

Steeple View Update – Allan Smith

Mr. Smith said that construction drawings for the first phase of the Steeple View project should be ready for bid by the middle of the month and he hopes to break ground within 3-4 months, with plans for a 9-10 month completion. He has some very good tenants for the space, but non-disclosure agreements prevent him from identifying them at this time. A Lancaster based firm will move the barn before construction begins, but he has not yet applied for any demolition permits [for the old showroom.]

Engineer's Report – Mario Canales

Mr. Walker reported on a meeting with Mayor Swartz and Dan Shaffer, President of First National Bank, during which Mr. Shaffer said the bank would provide a low rate loan to the Borough for

community development. With a decrease in liquid fuel costs and the possibility of a low interest loan, Mr. Walker felt it might be a good time to discuss possible plans for paving the Main Municipal Parking Lot. From a timing perspective, Mr. Walker felt that it would be better to complete the project this year, since there would be much activity when the Steeple View construction begins. Knowing the Newtown Creek Coalition's interest in a creek walk, he asked Mr. Canales to evaluate how a creek walk would affect the Borough parking lot. Mr. Canales determined that it was not a viable option, as approximately 50 parking spaces would be lost. Mr. Canales said if Council decides to pursue the project, the survey would take approximately one month and then the Borough could go out for bids, awarding the project in July, beginning the 4-6 week construction process at the end of August, assuming the Borough receives the permits from the Department of Environmental Protection and the Conservation District before starting. In response to Council's questions, Mr. Canales said there would be no re-design; the lot would be milled with base repair and leveling course. Adding lighting to the project would not fit into the timeframe, but Council could consider solar lights, which would not require conduit and could be added later. Mr. Canales said he could add conduit to the bid documents to obtain a cost for future lighting, but if Council decided to use solar, he could remove the conduit cost. Mr. King asked about the width for a creek walk and Mr. Canales responded that 8-10' would be required.

Ms. Woldorf presented Council with plans for an elevated walkway, which would not require the loss of parking spaces and the plantings would create a rain garden providing infiltration of some of the stormwater. Since the proposed project could be built separately, it would not conflict with the paving plans. Ms. Woldorf suggested looking at available grants to fund the project. Mr. Walker suggested that Mr. Smith use the same design for the Steeple View project, which might help retain some of the parking spaces on that side as well. He asked Mr. King to look at the proposal and return with some observations and asked Council to consider the parking lot plans for next week's meeting.

Budget & Finance – Chris Gusty & Perry Warren

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councillor Warren, seconded by Councillor Gusty, and carried unanimously, to approve the Professional Services Invoices for the month of December 2014.

Mr. Walker said that the Borough has used 140 tons of its 290 tons of pre-purchased salt and snow removal costs to-date are \$89,735.

Open Space – Perry Warren and Robert King

Councillor Warren reported that he and Councillor King accompanied Ms. Woldorf to the Open Space Board meeting on January 28, 2015. Ms. Woldorf's presentation was well received and the concept was approved. She will provide Council with a draft of the application and hopes they can approve a Resolution at the March Work Session. If all goes according to plan, the Borough will receive a check in May.

Last month resident Judy Bartella provided Council with information regarding a proposed hazardous waste disposal site in Falls Township and asked that they approve a Resolution asking to delay issuance of the permit to allow for more research on the project. EAC member Bob Abrahamson said that Ms. Bartella had spoken to their committee voicing the same concerns. Council asked the Solicitor to prepare a Resolution for the February Council meeting opposing the plan.

Streets, Roads & Properties – Robert Walker and Chris Gusty

Mr. Walker reminded the public of the importance of removing vehicles from the Snow Emergency Routes to assist in clearing of the snow. The police will enforce the requirement with towing and fines.

Traffic Committee – Tara Grunde-McLaughlin

Councillor Grunde-McLaughlin discussed the request of resident Patricia Pugh for a handicapped parking space on Mercer Street next to her home. Although she has a garage at the back of her property, she would like a space closer to the entrance to her home. The Traffic Committee reviewed Ms. Pugh's request and supported approving the parking space. They felt that parameters should be set for future requests and suggested reviewing approved spaces on a semi-annual basis and removing them when they no longer needed. The space requested is in the middle of the block and the Police Chief felt that it should be the space closest to the corner, which would also eliminate the need to parallel park. Council concurred that the space closest to the corner would be the best placement.

Solicitor's Report – William J. Bolla

Solicitor Bolla suggested that Council make a motion at the February Council meeting regarding the Land Development application for 139 N. State Street. The original application was submitted in 2013, with numerous extensions granted since that time. Council agreed to make a decision at the February 10, 2015, meeting.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Councillor Gusty discussed the idea of having Boy Scouts assist with snow removal for residents who are over the age of 60, have medical issues preventing them from shoveling, and/or need physical assistance. Council agreed to place information on the Borough's website and PEG channel about the program using Mr. Gusty's phone number as the contact.

President Walker advised Council members that he asked the Borough Secretary to remind them of deadlines and project responsibilities to keep things moving smoothly.

Councillor Warren announced that the Shade Tree Commission would meet on February 24, 2015.

Public to be Heard

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia M. Scull
Borough Secretary

ATTENDEES

Ted Schmidt
Petra Chesner Schlatter
Julia & Warren Woldorf
Marvin Cohen
Bob Abrahamson
Allan Smith
Andy Smith