

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH
Council Planning Session
December 4, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

President Cohn called the meeting to order at approximately 6:32 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, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Ms. Moore, Ms. Goodman, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin, and President Cohn. Also present was Cindy Bahn, Assistant Borough Manager. Mayor John Thompson and Ms. Ervin 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

None at this time.

CAPITAL PLANNING

1. Discussion – Traffic Circulation Study.

Ms. Evans started the discussion by informing Council about having looked at the Comprehensive Plan as Executive Director of WCDC and requesting an analysis of a traffic flow study specifically the one way streets on either side of Penn Avenue. The request has also come from residents and businesses. The study will be conducted in two phases proposing an evenly shared cost by the Borough of Wilkinsburg and the WCDC. Ms. Macklin asked about the purpose and wants to include a study for stopping and shopping. The first phase of the analysis involves data collection and traffic analysis and would require a second phase. Two public meetings will be scheduled. Ms. Macklin asked if the data collected will allow Council to look at stop and shop with the answer being yes. Ms. Evans explained that having the data will make it easier to get funding for the second phase of the project. The Parkway Ramp study will also help. The Traffic Flow Study will be conducted for other streets besides Penn Avenue. Traffic flows affect all streets and Council doesn't have the ability to just fix one or two streets with traffic problems due to traffic impact of other streets. President Cohn asked about how much time a study such as described would take. Ms. Evans explained the study is not a bid but a proposal and talked about a meeting with the manager and engineer to develop a scope of work. President Cohn commented wanting to capture traffic when the Parkway Ramp is closed. Ms.

Evans referred to page five of the handout and talked about a time frame of about three months. Projected time for data collection is four weeks, four weeks for analysis, and two weeks for a draft report. Ms. Goodman believes three months is too quick. She commented that realistically data should be collected for at least a year but may be too expensive. Ms. Evans explained the plan is for two public meetings with five meetings with stakeholders, steering committee members and representatives for a total time of three months. Penn Avenue traffic data is collected regularly and Council should be able to get the information from Penn Dot. Ms. Evans commented about accidents on side streets and working with the Police Department for data on documented accidents, changes and variations. Ms. Macklin mentioned a Signal Analysis Study in 2006 by the Borough Engineer that can be utilized as comparative data. Ms. Macklin is concerned about a traffic light replacement at Coal Street and Penn Avenue. Ms. Moore asked if more weeks will be added and cost more money with the study. Once the scope of work is reduced to a contract performers of the traffic study can be held accountable. Ms. Evans explained the plan was put together two and one-half years ago and the second phase is not included in the plan before Council. Ms. Macklin asked if the Borough has money for this. Ms. Macklin talked about renovations to parks will require \$90,000 to be brought up to safety standards. The Borough only has \$40,000. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson commented the Borough share for Ferguson Playground is \$20,000, leaving \$20,000 for maintenance of remaining parks. Ms. Moore agrees with moving forward with a traffic study. Ms. Macklin referred to the budget and in not noticing an excess fund balance and spoke about reduction to the fund balance being very low. Mr. Lefebvre commented there is unbudgeted revenue and if a grant can't be found there is money in the budget. He pointed out on the first page of the budget there is an excess fund balance. Ms. Evans talked about Penn Dot not being interested in Phase I of the study but that Phase II might be more attractive. Ms. Evans further noted grant funding for the project does not meet CDBG requirements. A question was raised by Ms. Moore about Trans Associates being the only company that performs traffic studies. Ms. Evans responded yes, and talked about other options with one option for the Borough Engineer, WCDC, and Borough Manager to meet and develop a scope of work and issue a request for proposal to present to Council. Ms. Moore expressed her belief in the need for the study. She commented about the parking at the Park & Ride has come up to Hill Avenue and residents not having a place to park. Ms. Evans talked about the parking at the former Popeye's and a lot full of cars with people parking there. She questions what will happen when the new owner takes over. There is an interest in that particular space by Penn Dot for a garage. Port Authority wants to add an additional two hundred spaces to the Park & Ride. Mr. Lefebvre asked Ms. Evans what the WCDC wants from Council. Ms. Evans answered she would like a consensus from Council on moving forward with a study being conducted by Trans Associates or the Borough issuing an RFP. Ms. Evans in convincing Council to move forward with the proposal talked about Trans Union and their willingness to sit down with the WCDC. The firm will also be working on the parkway metering project. The other option is approval for the Borough Engineer to sit down with the WCDC to develop a scope of work. President Cohn believes the Borough should seek bids and issue an RFP.

On motion by Ms. Goodman, second by Ms. Moore to direct the Borough Engineer and Borough Manager to meet with the WCDC to create a scope of work for presentation to Council for a traffic study.

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

Abstain: Ms. Evans

Motion carried 7: 1 Abstention

Ms. Evans thanked everyone involved with recent improvements to the Borough Building. Ms. Moore thanked everyone involved in improvements in and around the Borough Building also. Ms. Macklin wants to put excess money in the budget for upgrades to parks back to \$90,000 from \$40,000 to modestly put back into the parks. Ms. Moore asked if KaBoom is a one-time grant with the answer being yes. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson talked about DCNR having denied the request for Ferguson Playground Project again and the possibility to re-apply. Ms. Moore asked about a shared services meeting years ago. Ms. Evans talked about the gathering of numbers working with Mr. Shattuck for the analysis of all the parks for needed repairs that are safety related measures, updating to regulations for fence issues, and safety surfaces etc. She talked about the majority of the monies have to be spent just to get park equipment up to Code. Due to the product of neglect Ms. Evans expressed foreseeing difficulty in receiving grant monies for projects for repair to parks. There is a comprehensive list for repairs needed to parks. Some progress has been made for some of the needed repairs. Ms. Evans talked about Whitney Park and the lack of a real planning effort for major changes. She talked about having a master site plan for Whitney Park and the possibility to go back to DCNR for funding. Ms. Evans spoke of fence issues, safety issues with the playground equipment itself and surface issues. Most of the repair work is for issues due to a lack of annual maintenance. Ms. Macklin asked if the Borough Engineer can work on the plan to bring at least one park up to standards. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson talked about out of this year's budget in September, October the first half was approved. The second portion has to be funded to take care of other matters such as water and other issues. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson talked about the importance of regular maintenance. She suggested a contracted maintenance service to check safety issues once a month at all of the parks. Ms. Moore talked about vandalism being a big problem. Ms. Evans talked about at least Council has a road map for parks, but Whitney Park has not been addressed. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson spoke in agreement for working on Whitney Park as a next step. Ms. Moore asked about outstanding projects related to Capital Planning. Ms. Evans talked about an analysis for parking meters and review of those plans and options as something the WCDC can help with. Ms. Moore talked about commending Council for a job well done and putting a smile on faces. Ms. Macklin expressed her belief of not having a plan for Eastridge Library unless fundraising is being considered for the entire amount. Ms. Moore talked about Eastridge Branch of the library and the plan to raise funds. Her knowledge of a lack of specific plans for funding is attributed to her serving on the Library Board.

FINANCE

1. Monthly Financial Reports.

Mr. Lefebvre talked about distribution of expense and revenue updates and turned the discussion over to Mr. Egler. Mr. Egler opened the discussion by reporting that the Borough is doing very

well on the revenue side and directed Council to page one "Real Estate Revenue". He cautioned Council of having refunds well over \$123,000 and reflected it shows on page two of the expense report. The contributing factor is appeals. He commented on earned income tax and the Borough doing very well. Mr. Egler reported that current receipts are up and delinquency is down. He attributes this to Act 32. The real estate transfer tax is up and a sign that properties are moving. He reported on the cable franchise and the timing of payments coming close to and possibly a little over expected revenues for the year. Ms. Macklin asked about the business privilege tax and amounts way down (25%) from the prior year. Ms. Macklin mentioned amusement device machines and working on making money from them. MSF collections are up but not by comparison to budget figures but from last year revenue figures. The timing of payments is the contributing factor for this. Mr. Egler will email Council reports of figures that are more up to date. Ms. Evans asked about movement on tax amnesty. Mr. Egler responded he has been receiving numerous inquiries and receipts of small amounts. A report will be forthcoming. Ms. Macklin asked about the COPS Grant and an extension into next year. Mr. Egler will make sure all reports are filed. Mr. Egler talked about not having comments related to the expense side of financial reporting and believes department heads are performing a good job in controlling costs. Legal expenses are up and beyond control due to recent settlements and payouts. Ms. Macklin asked about contracted cleaning over budgeted. Ms. Moore asked the reason for being over budgeted with Mr. Egler explaining at the time of the budget the contracted service had not been finalized in looking for the best price. Ms. Evans asked about contracted services for shade trees and if there is a plan for tree services before the end of the year. Ms. Moore didn't have an answer. Ms. Evans asked if the budgeted amount will be carried over to next year with Mr. Egler instructing Council an official action at budget adoption is needed in order for carry-over of funds. Another option is to change the budget amount for 2014. Ms. Macklin asked about the EIP and status of a study of the Finance Department. Mr. Egler doesn't have a copy of the report that supposedly was sent October 28, 2013. President Cohn will send an email to Ms. Marcinko due to some questions about the study. Ms. Moore asked about the IT Department and talk about contracting out. Mr. Lefebvre commented he believes that prudence calls for hiring a staff person for managing computers and network responsibility. President Cohn spoke of having the discussion and for the ability to train staff to improve efficiency when computer problems are encountered. Cindy Bahn, Assistant Manager informed Council about installation of the new server because the old server performed at a ninety percent capacity.

Ms. Macklin asked Mr. Egler to report on the Finance Department restructuring. Mr. Egler expressed he had wanted an opportunity to speak about this before. He began by providing an overview of the current structure of the Finance Department with a Finance Director, two full-time clerks, and one part-time clerk. Library accounting responsibilities were picked up in April, 2013. One Finance Clerk is considering retirement by end of 2014. As a benefit to the community and maintaining the same structure, costs would only be up about \$10,000 for a Finance Assistant. Mr. Egler believes a Finance Assistant will help free up time for responsibilities that should be performed by the Finance Director.

Ms. Trice asked that the Code Enforcement Department go up to Marie Street at Laketon Road. She has a concern about blue tarp and believes it is church pews underneath the tarp. The tarp has been there three or four years now. The lot is vacant. Ms. Trice asked about solicitation for purchase of vacant lots and receipt of fifty applications. WCDC has advertised for purchase of

vacant properties having profiled people that have used the program. The Vacant Property Recovery Program is a County sponsored program. Ms. Trice asked for a copy of Borough owned lots.

Ms. Macklin commented she was questioned by Gable Ridge residents about a grant to fully fund WCDC for corporate sponsorship. The WCDC is fully funded for the next six years.

Ms. Moore talked about her Thanksgiving and complained of rodents in her neighborhood. Raccoons are responsible for dragging the garbage from curbside and strewn about. Ms. Bahn informed Ms. Moore the owners have been cited twice for dumping garbage.

Ms. Trice asked if the Borough can do anything about a garage on Crescent Street. The structure is without a roof, with toilets and mattresses about and an owner that can't be found.

Ms. Macklin asked about the train station and if anything is happening with the property. Ms. Evans responded the process is in limbo and a study by the WCDC shows it could be sustainable. Ms. Moore asked if a report is available for the study of the Train Station and if she can obtain a copy.

Ms. Macklin emphasized now is the time for lobbying for transit oriented development in your community. President Cohn asked Ms. Macklin to put together a resolution expressing Council support.

Ms. Evans commented about the railroad trestle study nearly complete.

Discussion about the former Gym of Future Champs and the transfer of the property is being presented to the Zoning Hearing Board for consideration of re-use.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Ms. Goodman, second by President Cohn, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:05 P.M.

Jason Cohn, Council President