

Council Work Session
September 24, 2009
Council Chambers

An Executive Session was held prior to the meeting for discussion of Personnel, Litigation & Collective Bargaining.

The regular monthly Work Session of Newtown Borough Council was called to order at 7:13 P.M. on Wednesday, September 24, 2009, by President of Council Mark Craig.

Present were Councilors Craig, Jaslow, O'Malley, Sellers, Walker and Woldorf; and Solicitor Donald Williams. Mayor O'Brien was ill and unable to attend.

The police contract discussion was removed from the agenda.

Public to be Heard

Sonya Aronowitz, 349 S. Lincoln Avenue, sent a letter to Mr. Craig regarding the house at 351 S. Lincoln Avenue, where 34 cats were found living on the property after a house fire. Ms. Aronowitz expressed concerns regarding health issues at the site and the effect on neighbors. She was also concerned about maintenance issues including an overgrowth of weeds that hindered the use of her driveway and a chimney that appeared to be in danger of falling.

Len Adamusko, 353 S. Lincoln Avenue, said he has known the occupant at 351 S. Lincoln for about 14 years and had been aware of a strong odor at the site for several years. Mr. Adamusko voiced concern about health issues related to cat urine and feces in the home, in addition to the issue of fleas and insects. He noted that there are no regulations in the borough regarding the number of pets allowed, just restrictions on types of pets, and he would like to see the Borough limit the number of pets.

Mr. Craig said that Emergency Services Director Don Harris is an appropriate contact. Mr. Harris is working with the Health Department, but he has limited ability to prevent people from moving back into a house, unless directly related to fire safety issues. Mr. Craig said that the Zoning Officer would be asked to address maintenance issues on the property and he would keep the neighbors updated on any developments.

Natalie Kaye, a Newtown Township resident, said that Newtown 21st Century Voice had received over 330 responses to their survey and noted that traffic, public safety, historic character, and environmental issues were the main concerns of the respondents. Ms. Kaye said the group would like to work with the Borough and Township regarding future planning.

Pam Fitzpatrick, a Newtown Township resident and member of the township EAC and Newtown 21st Century Voice, noted that the survey results supported the recent open space referendum.

Banner for St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Mr. Craig reported that the church has requested approval for a temporary banner to advertise a fall festival on October 2nd. The banner would be 12' x 4' with an interchangeable 4' x 3' attachment for different events.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councillor Sellers, seconded by Councillor Woldorf, and carried unanimously, to approve St. Luke's Episcopal Church hanging a 12' x 4' banner, with a 4' x 3' interchangeable attachment, noting that the large banner would include the name and phone number of the church and the attachment lettering would change for church events.

Minimum Municipal Obligations

Mr. Craig read the following announcement:

As required by Act 205 of 1984, the law requires the Chief Administrative Officer of each municipal pension plan to inform the governing body of the municipality of the Non-Uniformed Pension Plan and the Police Pension Plan expected financial obligation for the plan year 2010, no later than the last business day of September. The financial obligation for the Non-Uniformed Plan is \$7,702 and the figure for the Police Pension Plan is \$53,138.

There is one retired Newtown Borough police officer.

Hiring of Part Time Officers

Mr. Craig reported that Chief Wojciechowski would like to hire two part-time police officers: John Hermann and Michael Dalby. Mr. Dalby has expertise in accident reconstruction and motor carrier inspections.

- ❖ A motion was duly made by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Jaslow, and carried unanimously, to follow the recommendation of Mayor O'Brien and Chief Anthony C. Wojciechowski and hire, at will, Michael Dalby, as a non-civil service part time police officer, subject to the day-to-day supervision of Chief Wojciechowski or the officer in charge in the absence of Chief Wojciechowski, at a starting salary of \$16.00 per hour; the effective date for employment is September 28, 2009.
- ❖ A motion was duly made by Walker, seconded by Councillor O'Malley, and carried unanimously, to follow the recommendation of Mayor O'Brien and Chief Anthony C. Wojciechowski and hire, at will, A. John Hermann, as a non-civil service part time police officer, subject to the day-to-day supervision of Chief Wojciechowski or the officer in charge in the absence of Chief Wojciechowski, at a starting salary of \$16.00 per hour; the effective date for employment is September 28, 2009.

Discussion of Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Woldorf presented her suggested changes to the Comprehensive Plan, based on input from boards, committees and the sewer authority.

Mr. Jaslow questioned the inclusion of the highlighted box spotlighting Old Skunky. He stated that he had proposed alternative language in his letter to the Planning Commission. In reviewing minutes from past Council meetings, Mr. Jaslow noted that all past Councils had chosen not to address the Old Skunky issue and there was no documentation of the problem or reference to past flooding. He said he would like to see storm water management addressed comprehensively, without referencing specific issues such as Old Skunky. Mr. Jaslow stated that the Old Skunky engineering study should be completed before any inclusion of commentary on Old Skunky in the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Sellers felt that there should be reference of the history and past Councils discussion of the

Old Skunky issue. He clarified that the intention of the Old Skunky engineering study is to make suggestions to residents about how to address issues on their property, as well as to make global suggestions. Mr. Sellers said that history shows that Old Skunky is still an issue and he feels that local government should do what residents cannot to resolve the issues.

Mr. Craig noted that the Old Skunky engineering study would also analyze what the Borough and residents had done to divert and/or change its course.

Mr. Walker said that comprehensive storm water management should embrace all aspects of storm water. He noted that nowhere in the Comprehensive Plan does it say that the Borough would develop a comprehensive plan for storm water management, but he felt that storm water management should be addressed in the Plan.

Mr. Woldorf clarified that the Planning Commission saw nothing in the plan that prevented them from forwarding it to the school district for comment. It was Mr. Jaslow's understanding that the Planning Commission would be reviewing comments, editing and changing the plan before sending it to Council. Mr. Craig added that Council had asked the Planning Commission in May about additional feedback, and that Council assumed that the Planning Commission would incorporate any comments they received into the draft plan.

Since periodic review of the Zoning Ordinance is required, Mr. Jaslow felt that the statement regarding no zoning or ordinance changes being needed should be removed.

Mr. Craig said this is a good time to recommend zoning changes regarding future development. Ms. Woldorf noted there was a statement regarding the Stockburger site development, but Mr. Jaslow recommended that specific suggestions should be made, including what would be allowed and what should be excluded in the development of specific sites.

Mr. Craig said that Council needed to decide the process for discussion of the plan, and suggested that review should take place in two special meetings in October and/or November.

Mr. Jaslow said that Council should review the plan before beginning the 45-day period because time was less important than getting the document right.

Mr. Baumann said that any substantive changes would probably require the plan to be resent, and might even require reissuance by the Planning Commission. Mr. Craig said that he thought land use should be more specific.

Old Business

Mr. O'Malley requested that the Joint Traffic Committee be placed on the October work session agenda for discussion on a recommendation. The Committee has plans for an October Safety Week, which would require a resolution by the Borough and Township.

Public to be Heard

John Burke, 301 S. Norwood, reported that the Township Planning Commission meeting focused on what the members wanted the Sycamore Street Acme site to look like, and suggested that perhaps Council should consider their vision for the Stockburger site.

Paul Salvatore, 148 N. Elm, noted that there is a vacancy on the Newtown Corporation Board.

Joe Lovi, 151 N. State Street, suggested that a more appropriate method of communication about borough meetings and plans other than Facebook should be determined and utilized.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Dunleavy
Recording Secretary

IN ATTENDANCE

Paul Salvatore, 148 N. Elm Avenue
Diane LeBas, 104 Penn Street
Warren Woldorf, 440 E. Washington Avenue
Bill Heinemann, 35 N. Chancellor Street
Jennifer Pennington, 524 Penn Street
John Burke, 201 S. Norwood Avenue
Sonya Aronowitz, 349 S. Lincoln Avenue
Len Adamusko, 353 S. Lincoln Avenue
Carol L. Bove, 353 S. Lincoln Avenue
Joe Lovi, 151 N. State Street
Kara Seymour
Pam Fitzpatrick, Newtown Township resident
Sally Thompson, 200 N. Chancellor Street
Kris Bauman, Borough resident