

April 7, 2021

The Work Session of Lansdale Borough Council was held on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 online via Zoom Meeting and called to order at 8:47pm by President, Denton Burnell.

ROLL CALL:

- (X) Councilman Angelichio
- (X) Councilman Breish
- (X) President Burnell
- (X) Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton
- (X) Councilman DiGregorio
- (X) Vice President Fuller
- (X) Councilman Henning
- (X) Councilwoman Currie Teoh
- (X) Mayor Herbert

Borough Representatives:

Borough Manager, John Ernst
Finance Director, Melissa Gemelli
Police Chief, Mike Trail
Parks & Rec., Karl Lukens
Electric Superintendent, Andy Krauss
Public Works, Rick Delong
Fire Marshal, Rick Lesniak

Borough Solicitor, not present
Borough Engineer, not present
Library Director, Tom Meyer
IT/GIS Coordinator, Bryan Poster
Code Enforcement, Jason Van Dame
WWTP Superintendent, Dan Shinskie
Asst WWTP Super – Greg Rapp

Residents

None

Agenda Item #4 – Committee Reports

Administration and Finance Committee – Councilman Angelichio

1. Financials were reviewed as of 2/28/2021 – The full reports are in Dropbox. Revenues are up 36% and expenses are down 28%. Revenues are up in Electric as well as sewer funds. Capital Funds are up due to the Luxor project. There was a drop in expenses in all departments.
2. The Borough will receive the GFOA award again this year for excellence in accounting.
3. The PUC has removed their moratorium on shutting off electric accounts and charging penalties and late fees. We will do the same beginning June 1.
4. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Resolution to authorize Melissa Gemelli, Finance Director, to access PennDOT ECMS system.
 - Resolution to authorize Melissa Gemelli, Finance Director, to be the contact and signer at all financial Borough business.
5. There will be an increase for the Liberty Bell Trail in Stony Creek due to unsuitable soils and the cost of lumber plus a time extension due to COVID and weather.
6. There was public comment about not charging fees. Also, the old Hometown Hero banners can still be picked up at the Library and there is still space for new banners to be purchased.

Code Enforcement Committee – Councilman DiGregorio

1. Motion to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Preliminary and final land development approval for 151 E. Mt. Vernon Street. The applicant proposes to build a quadplex and a duplex. The property already has two duplex units so there would end up being a total of ten housing units.
2. The Planning Commission is scheduled to review an amended Conditional Use for 325 Madison Street. Equus would like to make some commercial space in Building E, facing the dog park, and change them into four residential units.
3. The owner of 501 N. Cannon Avenue submitted a sketch plan to convert the building to apartments. More to come on that at the next meeting.
4. Staff continues to test the online permitting and now needs to wait for a software update to continue to move forward.

President Burnell – What is the commercial space that Equus wants to convert?

Mr. Van Dame – It is on the side facing the dog park, not the plaza, on the first floor.

Mayor Herbert – Will this change their parking requirements?

Mr. Van Dame – They will have to develop the reserved parking area.

Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton – Will the building at 501 N. Cannon Avenue be demolished?

Councilman DiGregorio – No, it will be converted not demolished.

Economic Development Committee – Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton

1. The committee recommended the approval of Westrum Development's Economic Development Incentive that was approved by Borough Council last month.
2. Discussed the existing contract we have with Eric Goldstein to assist the Borough in identifying and implementing strategies to enhance the business climate in Lansdale. We signed a contract right before COVID hit last year and haven't really moved forward since. We discussed if it was feasible to continue with the contract as originally planned or if it was better to update the parameters of what we can use his expertise to accomplish in the current climate. Jason has reached out to him and we'll discuss options for moving forward at our next meeting.
3. Talked about how the EDC can help businesses in the Borough with relief funding that the Borough potentially may receive. Until final details and restrictions are released, this is just something for us to consider.

Electric Committee – Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton

1. PUC Lifted Ban on Electric Turn Offs- the committee briefly spoke about the Public Utility Commission's ban on utility turnoffs. This order was lifted effective April 1, 2021. The committee is recommending following the guidance of the Finance Department to move turn offs possibly starting in June 2021. Those who are still behind can work out a payment plan and seek assistance with Your Way Home.
2. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Verizon Joint Use Agreement for Utility Poles – An agreement has been made with Verizon and they will pay us \$19 per pole.
 - Bid award to B&B Boiler for the heaters and boilers at the electric service building and garage.

3. The Electric Department was awarded the Platinum designation from American Public Power Association's board, stating the Borough's excellence in reliability, workforce development, safety and customer service.
4. Reviewed the year three report of metering and savings verification involving the LED Street light conversion and with our initial investment of \$807,000 we are currently \$369,000 on the way to seeing that return on investment. Year three alone yielded \$125,000 of realized savings.
5. The Borough's Solar initiatives for the grant funded projects at the utilities complex and Borough Hall were featured in the Pennsylvania Municipal Electric Association's March newsletter for our forward thinking and green initiatives.
6. Department operations - Service upgrades and pole replacement on Derstine Avenue, renewing the service and equipment at The Reporter building, starting the 205-unit high-rise development at the Lansdale finishers property to become Lansdale Luxor, converting traffic lights to LED signals, tree trimming where needed, completed due diligence period for our energy consultant and we are waiting for recommendations and two more V plows were ordered to be installed on pick-up trucks for next season.

Councilman Breish – What is the cost of the tree trimming? Who is responsible for the trees we trim along the freight railroad tracks?

Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton – We paid \$178,000 for all trimming.

Mr. Krauss – Whether it is along the railroad tracks or not, it is in our right of way so we are responsible and they won't touch our lines. Tree trimming has not been done in a long time so the next time we do it, it won't be as costly.

President Burnell – The railroad doesn't benefit from what we cut do they?

Mr. Krauss – No, it does not benefit them.

Councilman Breish – Does the heating units include AC too?

Mr. Krauss – The AC was replaced in the office area already.

Library Committee – Vice President Fuller

1. The annual statistics report for the State is completed and Mary and BJ will need to sign it.
2. Reviewed the budget and discussed looking into getting an intern that could help put a fundraising plan together for the year which would include an annual appeal mailing. An annual appeal has not been done in at least 15 years.
3. Heard back about some grants that were applied for and found out we were awarded \$10,000 for 2 years (2021 & 2022) from the VNA Foundation for general operations; \$3,000 from the American Library Association for community engagement project; \$2,500 from QNB Bank for the "Behind the Screens" class.
4. Created a Story Walk to do in Stony Creek Park.
5. Will most likely move the Clean and Green event to September this year and are also trying to get TVs included which would require a larger space to run the event like the Vine Street parking lot.
6. Mr. Meyer is currently attending the Penn State Leadership training classes.

Parks and Recreation Committee – Vice President Fuller

1. North Penn Little League requested permission to hold a tournament the same weekend as a softball tournament. Karl will have to work out parking for both organizations.
2. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:

- Authorization to use Memorial Park for the Lansdale Festival of the Arts on August 28.
 - Approval for Perkiomen Watershed to submit a grant application for a rain garden in Stony Creek Park.
 - Resolution to support DVRPC's circuit trails in the Philadelphia Region.
 - Change order #1 to extend the timeline to complete the White's Road Park playground project.
 - Changer order #1 for the Liberty Bell Trail in Stony Creek Park due to unsuitable soil, Covid, weather and the expense cost of lumber right now. The timeline will also be increased.
3. A book club wanted to use the pavilion at Stony Creek for free. The committee agreed on a discounted fee, not free.
 4. Zumba and line dancing will start in the upper parking lot of White's Road Park.
 5. A lot of maintenance work is currently being done including getting the pools ready for the season. Memberships are going strong right now.
 6. As of now there will not be swim lessons the beginning the season. There is a need for lifeguards so if you know anyone tell them to apply.
 7. The dedication of the skatepark to Carl Saldutti will be Saturday at 10:00am.
 8. The water bottle filling stations are ordered.
 9. The position of Parks & Rec. 2nd class laborer applications are due by Friday.

Councilman DiGregorio – Where can residents play pickle ball? Can we create a spot for them?

Mr. Lukens – The Memorial Park tennis courts will have pickle ball and tennis lines after the renovation is done in June.

Public Safety Committee – Councilwoman Currie Teoh

1. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Ordinance to update the Vehicles and Traffic Codes to remove parking on Hemlock Dr., update snow alert zones and increase fines for not moving vehicle during snow alert.
 - Approve Lansdale Day for July 27 with Covid 19 mitigation plans.
2. Officer Hazel Bundy who has been a part-time officer is out doing patrols full time. Officer Thompson will go through field training for the next 16 weeks.
3. A speed study will be done on Edgemont Avenue near Poplar Street. There is a concern by residents of speeding and kids walking to school in that area.
4. Chief Trail relayed that after a conversation with Councilman DiGregorio he will consult with Montgomery Township when the Knapp Elementary School project is done about adding school zone signs along the S curve on Knapp Rd since it is a very long school zone and there are no lights on the back of the flashing light signs.
5. Rick Solomon and Nica from Well Crafted requested that two of the 15 minute parking signs that are along the one-way portion of Madison Street be move to the two-way portion of the street to more evenly distribute them. They also feel like the parking signage is difficult to read and understand in that area. They asked about the status of the updated parking study and wayfinding signage project.

President Burnell – So they are asking for a couple of signs to be moved to the other end of Madison Street?

Councilwoman Currie Teoh – Yes.

Councilman DiGregorio – Is there still free lunch time parking from 12-2 behind Wister’s and Stove and Tap?

Chief Trail – Yes. The most convenient parking is always the most expensive parking and that is the mindset nationwide. We need to be thinking about tomorrow and we need to be mindful of turnover for the businesses.

Councilman DiGregorio – Construction that is happening on that block is also causing a problem with parking right now.

Chief Trail – Council votes to move those projects forward so that is an issue that should be addressed when a project is approved.

Councilman Breish – Where are we at with the wayfinding signage?

Mr. Ernst – The Parking Authority approved the low bidder to fabricate the signs which will take about 2-3 months. Public Works will install the signs when they are ready.

Councilman Breish – What is happening with the parking study?

Mr. Ernst – The contractor just started gathering background information and it is difficult to do a study during a pandemic. When the pandemic is pretty much over the Parking Authority will decide when to move forward with the study.

Councilman Breish – Should they develop short term solutions now?

Mr. Ernst – He can reach out to them and see what they say.

President Burnell – the purpose of the study is to look for a holistic situation and solutions.

Mayor Herbert – Moving the 15 minute spaces is not just for Well Crafted to use, they are for any business to use.

Councilwoman Hawkins Charlton – With what is happening in Minnesota with Chauvin trial, does the LPD have a plan in place for when the verdict is in?

Chief Trail – All departments county wide are working together in response to whichever way the verdict goes but we can’t disclose that information.

Public Works Committee – Councilman Breish

1. Motions to appear before Council at the next business meeting:
 - Bid award for the traffic signal maintenance contract to Armour & Sons.
 - Resolution for a cost share agreement with NPWA on the Laurel Lane Rehabilitation project.
 - Resolution to extend the Intergovernmental agreement with the Wissahickon Watershed Partnership.
 - Change order #1 to extend the time for the security & fire alarm system at WWTP.
 - Change order #2 & #3 for the security & fire alarm system at WWTP in the amounts of \$3,476 and \$1836.20.
2. 2020 Mill & Overly Program – It is anticipated that final milling and paving of Pennbrook Avenue will take place the first week of May, weather permitting.
3. Columbia Avenue Rehab project - a preconstruction meeting was held on April 1st and construction will begin on April 26, 2021. The contractor will start with water mains and service lines. NPWA will be contacting the residents about the upcoming roadwork and the contractor will be placing door hangers at each residence.
4. Laurel Lane Rehab project – A preconstruction meeting will take place on April 11 with the project starting mid-June.
5. NPWA will be replacing water mains and service lines on Pierce Street beginning April 9, 2021. He has asked NPWA for a construction timeline to keep the Borough informed of this upcoming work. NPWA and the contractor will be notifying the residents of this upcoming work.

6. Sewer lining on Hancock Street will be done from the manholes and will be coated the week of April 19. This is part of the Pennbrook Avenue Sanitary Sewer project.

Agenda Item #5 – Announcements

Councilman Henning – #LansdaleStrong is going on this week. Get out to the participating businesses to get your pint glass.

Councilman Breish – The Friends of the Park will host a clean-up the parks event on April 24.

Agenda Item #6 – Public Comment

None

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10pm