

A meeting of Portage Borough Council Committee of the Whole was held on Tuesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

Those in attendance were:

Sharon McCarthy	David Hayes	James Kissell	George Wozniak
Jerome Yetsko	Todd Learn	John Morgan	

Also present were: Robert Koban, Borough Manager and Michelle Claar-Secretary.

**Visitors:**

In attendance were: Mr. Ron Portash with the Dispatch; Ms. Jean Kinley

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

A. Update on DCNR Recreation Director/Manager Peer to Peer support

Mr. Koban informed Council that he did attend the last Portage School Board meeting to address the support letter for the Peer to Peer grant study for the Recreation Manager. Mr. Koban left the meeting prior the Board taking any official action on the support letter; however, did find out later that the Board did not approve the support letter. Mr. Koban also commented that he will be meeting with the Portage Planning Commission as well. There is still no response from Cassandra Borough. Mr. Koban questioned Council on how they would like to proceed; either by moving forward with submitting the grant without the support letters and/or proceeding on our own. Mr. Koban commented that since the inception of the ½ EIT tax, the Capital Improvement Savings Fund could be utilized for the position if we pursued the recreation manager position. There is no closing for the grant application with DCNR. A lengthy discussion took place again among Council concerning:

- Support from Portage Commissions and Organizations, Portage Township
- Scope of the Peer to Peer Study and the DCNR grant
- Ground for a Recreation Center
- Additional donation to the Park and mailing campaign
- Other recreation managers in the area
- The Comprehensive Plan portion regarding recreation between the Borough, Township, and Cassandra
- Routine maintenance, signage, and pavilions at the Park

Mr. Koban commented that since the above has been discussed several times in the past, he requested Council direction on how to proceed.

ON MOTION OF MR. KISSELL, SECONDED BY MR. WOZNIAK, COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO MOVE FORWARD THE PEER TO PEER GRANT SUBMISSION WITHOUT HAVING SUPPORT LETTERS AND ON OUR OWN. VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. LEARN, MR. MORGAN, MR. YETSKO, MR. HAYES, MR. WOZNIAK, MR. KISSELL AND MS. MCCARTHY, MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

B. Borough Roof Project

Mr. Koban advised that a meeting will be held on Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. Members of the Building Committee, Mr. Wisor, Mr. Emerick, American Roofing will also be in attendance.

C. CVA grant for Trout Run Flood Protection

Mr. Koban advised that there was no update on any grant funding.

D. Promoting Tourism in Portage

Mr. Portash advised that he would like to fill the remaining brochure areas with pictures. Recommendations for pictures were; the Arch, the railroad tracks, and the new memorial stone at the Park.

E. Update on Deputy Tax Collector

Ms. Claar informed Council that she spoke with Ms. Joanne Redfern concerning office hours for the collection of real estate taxes in March. Ms. Redfern confirmed that she will be providing tax collection hours beginning Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 between the hours of 8:30 am. – 11:30 a.m. Mr. Emerick faxed over a Deputy Tax Collector form if Council decided that we need to appoint an additional Deputy Tax Collector. Ms. Claar also advised that the individual would need to be certified and qualified, along with approval from the Portage Area School District and Cambria County. After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Hayes and Mr. Kissell suggested researching the issue further.

F. Sacred Heart Church Tax Exemption

At the request from Council at last meeting, Mr. Emerick provided additional information on PA Tax Exemption for real property owned by Churches for Council to review. In accordance with the 53 PA.C.S.A. §8812(a)(1) exemptions; the Church is restricted to the actual place of worship. The Church has not had actual worship services and would not be entitled to a tax exemption for the property. A suggestion was made to notify the Cambria County Tax Assessment Office.

**BUILDINGS:**

A. Gaunt Property-532 Dulancey Drive

Mr. Emerick sent notice that a hearing has been rescheduled for Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at DMJ Prebish's Office.

B. Nicholson Property-517 Main Street-There was no update

C. Nicholson Property-Storage units at Sugar Alley-there was no update.

D. Mark Kissell Property-1315 Jefferson Avenue

Mr. Kissell advised that he spoke with Mark and they have an arrangement for a Contractor to come in to demolish the structure. A demolition permit will have to be obtained from the Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency.

E. Property complaint at 1007 Conemaugh Avenue-Vivis

A citizen complaint was received by Ms. Claar concerning the broken glass and debris from the property located at 1007 Conemaugh Avenue. Mr. Koban advised that this property has been on the list in the past and the citations have been paid. Mr. Koban commented that Officer Leyo had issued another citation and that we need to take control of other property conditions within the Borough.

F. Ms. McCarthy questioned if the Mountain Avenue property; brought up at the last Meeting, has been resolved.

**2. New Business:**

A. Discussion on drainage and sump pump issues on various properties

Mr. Koban advised that Mr. Wisor is in the process of researching and developing plans.

## B. Off-Street Parking on Branch and Central Alley

Mr. Koban provided Council with copies of the ordinance and the chart of the businesses/resident that either rent or lease parking spaces. The parking chart in the back reflected the number of spaces;

- 4 empty spaces by Fire Dept
- 8 spaces for the Fire Dept
- 10 spaces for the Borough
- 1 space for Andy Raptosh resident/leased
- 34 spaces for The Royal Ballroom/ 1 space leased-remaining special events parking
- 16 spaces for Mainline Pharmacy/leased
- 8 spaces for Charles Stotler, MD office/leased
- 3 spaces for Ed Hill/leased
- 1 space for Jaytar Computers/leased

Mr. Koban commented that a couple issues have arose with leasing other spaces. The chart has been maintained since 2000. Mr. Koban commented that several businesses/residents hold valid lease agreements, usually renewing from year to year. The parking has presented some issues since Craig Mazz's opened last year. The Royal Ballroom has 34 spaces that used for special event purposes, however; the spaces are usually empty during the day and evening. Mr. Koban informed Council that the ordinance needs reviewed and discussed to resolve any issues. A lengthy discussion took place on the following:

- ❖ Validity of lease agreements
- ❖ Free parking in certain areas
- ❖ Special event parking permits at \$2.00 per event; parking attendant, cones
- ❖ Flat rate charges/revisions
- ❖ Metering the unleased spaces
- ❖ Elimination of special event parking section of ordinance
- ❖ Fairness to other customers that are paying a fee
- ❖ Discussion on businesses being charged

Ms. Jean Kinley commented that Council had spent a ½ hour on the issue and there was no resolution.

## C. On-Street Metered Parking

Mr. Koban provided Council with the ordinance for the metered parking throughout the Borough. Several metered spaces were eliminated when businesses requested to purchase the space(s). Some of the metered spaces that were removed should now be replaced with the meters. Mr. Koban suggested reviewing the metered spaces and have the meters replaced back.

## 3. Paying of the Bills

Ms. Claar presented a copy of the bills and additional bills to be paid in written form. Ms. Claar commented on the Stiffler, McGraw invoices relating to the Borough roof project.

ON MOTION OF MR. WOZNIAK, SECONDED BY MR. KISSELL, COUNCIL AGREED TO PAY THE BILLS AS PRESENTED IN WRITTEN FORM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,863.20. VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY INCLUDED MR. LEARN, MR. MORGAN, MR. YETSKO, MR. HAYES, MR. WOZNIAK, MR. KISSELL AND MS. MCCARTHY, MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

**GOOD OF THE BOROUGH**

The Cambria County Commissioners sent notice of recent legislation in PA under the Land Bank Act that enables municipalities and counties to develop a comprehensive strategy to address blight. The Commissioners are hosting a seminar with the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies and Vision 2025 on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 at the Cambria County Courthouse from 3:05 to 4:00 p.m. in Courtroom #1.

There being no further business

**ADJOURNMENT**

ON MOTION OF MR. WOZNIAK, SECONDED BY MR. KISSELL, COUNCIL  
UNANIMOUSLY ADJOURNED AT 8:28 P.M.