Borough of Carlisle
Meeting Minutes
COVID-19 Recovery Efforts
May 29, 2020

Present at the meeting: Councilors Crampsie, Fulham-Winston, Hicks, Landis, Mayor Scott, Deputy Mayor Shultz and Stuby. Also present were: Borough Manager Armstrong, Assistant Borough Manager Snyder, Police Chief Landis, Water Resources Director Malarich, Community Development Manager Skelly, Parks & Recreation Director Crouse, Parking Supervisor Hamilton, Fire Chief Snyder and Public Information Coordinator Taylor

I. Call to Order

Mayor Scott welcomed all those in attendance.

II. Introduction Remarks

Mayor Scott remarked that Borough Council held this special meeting to address potential small business recovery strategies in response to COVID-19. Borough Council has taken steps to facilitate and assist with a variety of recovery efforts. They have identified ordinances and zoning rules that could potentially be lifted during a public health crisis. Other potential strategies named were, repurposing public space for temporary local business activities, street closures for pedestrian access, parking enforcement modifications and installation of hand washing facilities.

III. COVID-19 Recovery Strategies Discussion:

A. Proposed Concepts Received

Deputy Mayor Shultz acknowledged there are those citizens that have struggled through the COVID-19 circumstances over the past months. He noted federal monies from the CARES Act have been allocated to the Borough in the amount of $150,000. These funds will be used to support local businesses in their recovery efforts. A spending plan will be submitted to HUD for their approval. Once approved, the program will be allocated as grants or forgivable loans for local businesses to help supplement other programs they received.

Borough Manager Armstrong remarked after a five-day public comments period the plan would then be submitted to HUD by mid-June. The Borough would receive a decision from HUD within 45 days of a decision for approval.

Assistant Borough Manager Snyder provided an overview of conceptual strategies that would be considered to help adjust Borough operations during this time of recovery phase. The concepts that were to be evaluated were:

- Increase outside dining and the evaluate the effect on parking
- What adjustments may be needed to accommodate parking
- Using borough streets and alleys to facilitate businesses to operate and follow social distance guidelines
- Businesses utilize Borough parks as a place to hold functions
- Consider sanitation and hygiene options within the Borough to maintain a safe environment
- Use of public spaces to promote recovery

Borough Manager Armstrong commented that staff understands that restaurants will rely on accommodations and attracting customers to outdoor dining areas. She noted it is a high
priority for the Borough to focus on the changes to the sidewalk ordinance and considering public spaces for the small business activities.

B. Additional Suggestions from Business/Property Owners

Laura Portillo, owner of two restaurants in the Borough, expressed concerns that she is limited by lack of parking at one location, to be used for outdoor dining. She also noted that Café Bruges is not permitted to serve liquor outside and voiced her concern regarding the logistics of COVID-19 guidelines for patrons when dining outdoors. Ms. Portillo inquired who is working with the PLCB to allow outside alcohol sales.

Mayor Scott remarked that Borough staff, Chamber of Commerce, DCA along with state officials will work together to obtain answers to provide guidelines for outside dining.

Ms. TaWanda Hunter, inquired if there is a plan for CBGD funds to get to the pockets of the population defined by the DOH health equity response team as vulnerable in the form of testing, assistance returning to work or retraining for pandemic specific occupations.

Borough Manager Armstrong replied that the Borough is a HUD entitlement community and we will be the recipient of stimulus dollars. In addition, Cumberland County will also be the recipient of three quarters of a million through the CARES Act. The County will earmark monies for the non-profit agencies and accept applications from agencies requesting the funds. She remarked that each year the Borough receives an annual allotment of CDBG monies. These funds are used for shop steadying loans, Memorial Park, Hope Station and Employment Skills Center. This year the Borough will receive a proposed $373,000 in their annual allotment and unexpended monies from prior CDBG funds. She noted the monies would fill certain gaps and efforts would be made to prevent duplicate efforts with other agencies and the County.

Councilor Landis recommended coordinating with the nonprofit organizations that fill the gaps to see where their monies would best spent.

Chad Kimmel from Grand Illusion remarked that he would benefit with two parking spaces in front of his building for extra spaces for seating. Mayor Scott remarked that Council would discuss those types of options for businesses and report out a later date.

Chris Petsinis inquired if the open container law would conflict with costumers consuming alcohol as take out. Councilor Crampsie remarked that Council could have a discussion to lift the open container law for a certain period of time.

Karen Griffith inquired from a zoning stand point could requests for signage be streamlined and to allow temporary signs on the sidewalk and not just in windows. Councilor Landis remarked there should be a balance between outdoor signs and seating, so they do not infringe on public space.

Mark Farrell from Hook and Flask reported that he was in a meeting with the PA Restaurant and Lodging Association and they are working with the PLCB to have a form ready for businesses to request extending their outside seating areas. He noted if the municipality allows extended seating, the PLCB would expedite the requests for permitting outside seating.

Ashleigh Corby asked for clarification regarding the how much space is currently required for passageway around the sidewalk seating. Chief Snyder remarked to follow the six feet social distancing guidelines, there must be six feet between tables and persons walking on the sidewalk.
Pam Fleck, asked if parking is to remain free and recommended keeping it free from 11 AM to 3PM in order to keep office workers from filling up the parking spaces.

Councilor Landis inquired if PennDOT now has an easier process for dining decks. Councilor Fulham-Winston questioned if PennDOT would allow the Borough to use parking spaces for a walkway. Mark Malarich explained that PennDOT would consider us using the street for a walkway, but the Borough would need to place a conspicuous barrier to protect pedestrians and allow ADA access. Councilor Lands suggested finding creative partnership to help with costs that may be incurred if parking spaces are utilized as a walkway.

Borough Manager Armstrong communicated that the present sidewalk ordinance requires a four-foot allowance for unobstructed passageway, but this conflicts with the six-foot social distancing requirement at this time. She questioned if the businesses would prefer extra dining spaces or do they value the parking spaces.

Becky Richeson asked if the Borough would consider a designated outdoor space where people could bring drinks purchased from downtown establishments, possibly on Thursday through Saturday nights. Borough Manager Armstrong stated that options could be explored and asked for input from the businesses. She suggested possibly using one of the Borough’s public parking lots, such as the East Louther Street South Parking lot for a seating area.

Stephanie Gilbert asked what the strategies would be for making up the loss of parking spaces if they were used for pedestrian traffic. Discussion ensued among Council regarding how to find a balance between the uses of parking spaces and creating outdoor dining areas. There was also discussion regarding closing certain streets on a given night to allow for an outdoor eating area.

Councilor Crampsie recommended exploring alternate outdoor dining areas but had reservations on eliminating too many parking spaces along with a safety concern for pedestrians.

Discussion ensued regarding promoting the Borough’s Parking Garage free parking and to encourage patrons to walk a block to their destination.

Councilor Stuby inquired if the merchants can choose to have outdoor seating on the street or keep the parking space and would it have to be all one or the other. Mayor Scott noted there would need to be discussion with the merchants to find a balance for a workable plan.

Councilor Crampsie suggested closing a certain street on given night and questioned how that would affect staff utilization and parking.

Councilor Shultz noted if outdoor dining spaces were provided that would allow restaurants to expand their seating limitations while in the yellow and green phase of restrictions.

Councilor Hicks suggested taking a survey of downtown businesses to obtain their opinion on parking and outdoor seating areas. He will work with the DCA to promote a survey.

Ashleigh Corby inquired if outdoor seating décor must be taken inside each night and can people stand outside in a roped off area. In response to standing during dining, it is required that patrons be seated while in an outdoor dining area. Mayor Scott noted there would need to be further discussion regarding the removal of seating décor at the end of the night.
Lynn Jackman had several questions regarding opening up her outdoor patio for her business. It was recommended that she call the Chamber of Commerce to help with her questions.

Jay Abom asked when the downtown parking enforcement would resume. Borough Manager Armstrong noted that this is being monitored and the Borough will consider alternate methods of enforcement.

Parking Supervisor Stacey Hamilton noted when the county employees return to the Courthouse for work, there would be enforcement of the two-hour time limit, silver meters. The Parking Enforcement officers would monitor the silver meters by electronic tire chalking and issue tickets to those going beyond the two-hour limit. She noted other options being considered are providing free parking for county workers at the gold meters as well as the parking garage and Borough parking lots. This would allow turn over at the downtown parking space for visitors.

Councilor Landis suggested considering working with local churches to allow county workers to park in their lots.

Sara Tabby inquired about the CARES Act money that the Borough is to receive and how businesses will obtain the money. Deputy Mayor Shultz responded that the Borough is working with HUD to finalize a plan to allocate the monies.

Borough Manager Armstrong stated the Borough is required to submit an outline listing the uses for the monies received. Once the Borough receives approval from HUD, Borough businesses would submit applications to request the monies.

Mark Farrell inquired when Council would meet to take action on the items that were discussed in this meeting.

Borough Manager Armstrong noted certain items like the sidewalk ordinance can be addressed rather quickly and others will need to wait for approval. Deputy Mayor Shultz noted decisions that involve PennDOT would take some time, but with the implementation of the Emergency Declaration the Borough is able to make decision relatively quickly concerning permitting and opening outdoor dining spaces. Deputy Mayor Shultz commented that the retail stores have different challenges and encourage merchants to submit comments to the Borough.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of the Borough parks for local businesses to host recreational programs. It was noted that the application for businesses to submit a request for the use of a park has been revamped and will go to the solicitor for review. Councilor Landis suggested creating a resource guide on our social media that would include Borough updates with available applications, along with links to the DCA and the Chamber of Commerce.

IV. Closing Remarks

Mayor Scott noted the Borough would continue to monitor to the COVID-19 situation and will continue to provide guidance and assistance to all local businesses and residents. He encouraged businesses to email the questions they have to Borough staff.
V. Adjournment

There being no further business or public comment, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

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Timothy A. Scott
Mayor

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Joyce E. Stone
Borough Secretary

Councilor Stuby inquired